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NEW POEMS

BY

OWEN MEREDITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.

ORVAL AND OTHER POEMS.



BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1868.

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CONTENTS.

—◆— CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.

	PAGE
BOOK VIII. (CONTINUED.)	3
John Peter Carafa	5
Picaroons	10
Christian, the Dol-Hartzog	11
Elisabetta Sirani	15
Richelieu.	
I. The Poets	21
II. The Three Estates	23
III. Wallenstein's Death	24
The Dauphin	25
BOOK IX. HERE AND THERE	29
Atlantis	31
Misery	40
Melancholia	59
Last Words of a Sensitive Second-rate Poet	64
A Beaten Army	75
A Poor Man ; or, the Match-Maker and the Bird	78
A Man of Science, or the Botanist's Grave	84
A Great Man	99
Mabel May	104
Epilogue	109
ORVAL ; OR, THE FOOL OF TIME	117
Dedication	119
Preface	121

First Epoch. — Bride and Bridegroom	123
Second Epoch. — Husband and Wife	149
Third Epoch. — Father and Son	213
Fourth Epoch. — Man and Man	257
Fifth Epoch. — Man and Fate	349
IMITATIONS AND PARAPHRASES	391
Nonnos.	
Europa	395
Virgil.	
The Bees of Aristæus	401
Lucretius.	
Invocation to Venus	412
Dante.	
The First Canto of the Inferno	416
Francesca da Rimino	422
Michelagnolo Buonarroti. — Sonnets and Madrigals.	
The Birth of Love	426
Love Vindicated	427
Madrigals	428
Canzone	431
Ronsard.	
Sonnets and Chansons	434
Danish.	
The Elves	438
Lord Olaf	
Part I.	442
“ II.	446
SERVIAN	451
Note	453
The Battle of Kossovo	457
The Stag and the Vila	480
Love and Sleep	482
Tittle-Tattle	483
Matrimonial Considerations	484
Love confers Nobility	486
A Soul's Sweetness	486
Reminiscences	487
Sleep and Death	488
A Conjugal Dispute	489

CONTENTS.

v

Degrees of Affection	492
The Fair Ikonja	494
A Wish	496
Imperfection	496
Emancipation	497
The Voice of Nature ; or, What the Fish said to the Maiden	497
The Malady of Moïo	498
A Servian Beauty	500
A Discreet Young Woman	501
Boloz'novitch the Knave	503
The Wife of Hassan Aga	505
Sleeplessness	511
Neglected Flowers	511
Plucking a Flower	512
Transplanting a Flower	513
A Message	514
Isolation	514
A Regret	515
The Ban of Varadin	516
Fatima and Mehmed	517



CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.

(CONTINUED.)

VOL. II. I

BOOK VIII.

(CONTINUED.)

FROM 1525 TO 1789.

NARRATIVE, DRAMATIC, AND LYRICAL.

“Semper enim, ubi de spe æternitatis agitur, omnia alia
contemnere non solum licet, sed etiam expedit.”

Cardan Proxeneta., cxii. 666, Elzevir edit.



JOHN PETER CARAFA.

(HONORES MUTANT MORES.)

A. D. 15—.

[“Quelle . . . che sono fatti per amministrare le cose spirituali non hanno bisogno di niente.” — *Letters of Cardinal Carafa. Caracciolo MSS.* “Tal era il furore e la cupidigia dei Carafa, che pareva fossero tornati i tempi dei Borgia.” — *Botta, Storia di Italia*, lib. ix. p. 226.]

1.



JOHN PETER, Count of Madalone, son
Of Count John Anthony Carafa, fled
From Rome, indignant at the evil done
By wolves that on the fold of Christ
were fed :

2.

And gave himself to Poverty and God :
And with firm footstep, pure, severe, and sad,
The untrodden paths of abnegation trod,
Poor amidst wealth, and grieved by evil glad.

3.

The fame of his fair life, and fervid faith,
Grew with the growing evil of the time,

6 *CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.*

And sounded as the archangelic breath,
Blown through Heaven's trump, in challenge to
Earth's crime.

4.

The Holy Father of the Faithful thought,
" My counsellor shall be this saintly man,
As God is his " ; and many a time besought
John Peter's presence at the Vatican.

5.

But to the sinful city he had fled
With feet that, winged by indignation, shook
Rome's dust away, the self-made exile said,
" The spirit that is within me will not brook

6.

" To breathe the breath of thy polluted air."
Howbeit, when God's Viceregent sent from Rome
Command to him to come, in place of prayer,
Loyal to his high lord, he groaned, " I come."

7.

And, being at Rome, to one that loved him,
there
He wrote " In all this evil lump no
leaven
Is left : but it is evil everywhere :
And here man's heart fears neither Hell nor
Heaven.

8.

" My sister, I have lived to loathe this life,
And call on Death to lead my spirit home.

Death hears me not. God's will prolongs the strife
My sad soul wages with the sins of Rome." *

9.

Sometimes the high hand of his Holiness
Doth, for the ennobling of the Church, dispense
Honors whereby a good man's lowliness
Is raised into a great man's Eminence :

10.

But, in the Church's pious customs never
(Nor the traditions, nor the usages
Of immemorial Rome, wherein forever
As the tradition so the usage is)

11.

Prescription, precedent, or practice showed
That, if the head of its recipient
Were housed in Rome, to the man's own abode
A scarlet hat might properly be sent.†

12.

This pauper Priest was made a Cardinal :
The Pope's own envoy bore the scarlet hat
To his poor house ; and found not wherewithal,
(Save the one stool where its lone inmate sat)

* Letters to his Sister : selected by M. Charles de Samm from the MS. collection of the Duke of Policastro.

† "Jamais Pape n'avait envoyé la barrette à un prélat présent à Rome." . . . "Tel était la pauvreté du nouveau Cardinal qu'il n'y avait dans sa petite chambre de meuble convenable pour y poser la barrette, et qu'il n'avait rien à offrir à l'envoyé du Pape chargé de la lui remettre. Tout Rome en parlait et s'en étonnait." — *Caracciolo MS.*

13.

In that bare lodge, that wanted all save worth,
To place the gift ; whose stern recipient gazed
Ungladdened, and from thankless doors drave forth
The messenger unmoneyed and amazed.

14.

At length one Pope, and then another, died ;
And Cardinal Carafa, after these,
Became a Pope himself. The whole world cried,
“ ’T is well ! for he is worthy of the keys.”

15.

Simple, austere, men knew him. Pure his name,
And praised his virtues. Nobly born was he,
Yet not ignobly known. His ample fame
Was spotless. Worthier Pope there could not be.

16.

“ The luxury of the new Pope’s table ” (writes *
A Venice envoy to the Vatican)
“ Is more than may be dreamed of. All delights
With all magnificences this proud man

17.

“ Mingles in one. The daintiest viands grace
The costliest dishes ; the most sumptuous wines
From the most gorgeous goblets flow to chase
Care from the banquet where his splendor shines :

18.

“ Good cheer he loves ; and lustily he eats
And deep he drinks ; right royal is his tone ;

* *Relazione di Bernardo Navigero.*

The mightiest monarchs of the world he treats
As clots of common dust beneath his throne :

19.

“ His daily drink is butts of burning black
Fierce Naples wine, and cups of Malvoisie.
Methinks his belly is but a Bacchus’ sack.
And his least meal meats five-and-twenty be.

20.

“ Wondrous his wealth is. Of his noble birth
So proud is he, and of his present state,
That even as though he scorned to tread on earth
Is the high going of his haughty gait.

21.

“ His nephews are the richest lords in Rome.
And, for the greatness of the power they have,
Many there be that flatter them, and some
That in dark wishes dig them a deep grave.”

22.

Dame History is so old, she knows not well
Present from Past. She loves to say her say
Till it is stale, and the same story tell
To-morrow as she told it yesterday.

PICAROONS.

1593.

1.



HO gallops by night, when the owl is
about ?
O who, fellows, who but the bold Pica-
roon ?
Short shrift for the lord, and a rope for the lout,
And 't is merry to ride by the light of the moon,
With hey, fellows, hey !

2.

The Provost of Flanders looked woful to see
(With hey, fellows, hey for the bold Picaroon !)
Black Jack, his own knave, in the hollow oak-tree
Roasting alive by the light of the moon,
With hey, fellows, hey !

3.

Be it Dutchman or Spaniard, all fowl is fair game :
Belted Flanders Militia-man : Brabant Dragoon :
Where 's the jack knave o' them fears not the name
O' the roaming night-rider, the bold Picaroon ?
And hey, fellows, hey !

CHRISTIAN, THE DOL-HARTZOG.

(SO CALLED FROM HIS FURIOUS BEHAVIOR.)

1660.



CHRISTIAN, Duke of Brunswick, and
Bishop of Halberstadt,
For a token of love, wore a lady's glove
in the loop of his riding-hat.
For he had seen the Bohemian Queen in England ;
and, they say,
In the sole soft part of his rock-rough heart slept
the memory of that day.
For Christian, the Dol-Hartzog, was half a brute
at the best,
With but little space for a lady's face to lie and be
loved in his breast.
Yet he may have loved well, for he hated well
(though he showed his hate like a beast,
With tooth and claw), and the thing of things
that he hated most was a priest.
He mauled the monk, and flayed the friar, nor left
the abbot a rag,
And "*Gottes Freund and Pfaffern Feind*" was the
boast on his battle flag.
Yet he worshipt God in his own wild way, — as a
beast might worship too, —
Simply by thoroughly doing the work which God
had set him to do :
With never a *Pater noster* said, never a candle
burned,

And never a *pleni gratia*, for any good gift returned.
 Worship no better than any beast's ! yet with
 reverence, too, to spare,
 Of its own dumb kind, in the silent mind, for what
 God made gentle and fair.
 At least, from one touch I argue as much in this
 wild man of Halberstadt,
 Since, for token of love, a pure lady's glove he
 wore in his riding-hat.

Christian, the Dol-Hartzog, came riding to Paderborn ;
 And his men were dropping for lack of bread, and
 his horses for lack of corn.
 Not a crown-piece in the coffer, either bread or
 corn to buy !
 " What shall we do, Duke Christian ? " " Any-
 thing, friends, but die ! "
 " The Saints us save," saith some one, " for we
 are weary and faint."
 " 'Sdeath ! and so they shall, good fellows ! Who
 is the Paderborn Saint ? "
 " The Paderborn Saint is the Saint Liboire ; and
 his image stands by itself
 As large as life in the church, all covered with
 jewels and pelf."
 " The Saint Liboire is a saint of saints, for he to
 our pious wishes
 Shall accord a final miracle in the way of the
 loaves and fishes !
 Faith ! since he hath jewels, and since he hath pelf,
 he shall buy us both bread and corn,
 And if ever I swear by a saint, it shall be by the
 Saint of Paderborn."

Christian, the Dol-Hartzog, rode on into Munster
town,
There, in the great Cathedral, (greater for their re-
nown !)
Carven in silver, and covered with gold, (truly a
glorious band !)
Round the altar, all in a row, the Twelve Apostles
stand.
Christian, the Dol-Hartzog, called his captains of
war :
“ We will visit these Twelve Apostles, and see how
their worships are.”
Then they all went clanking together (godless
knaves as they were)
Over the sacred flintstones, up to the altar stair :
Never a *De profundis* was heard, never an anthem
sung,
But where, through great glooms, 'twixt the sol-
emn tombs, those iron footsteps rung,
Each priest, like a ghost, from that grizzly host,
pattered off o'er the pavement stone,
And the iron men and the silver saints stood face
to face and alone.
To that Sacred Dozen, through a silence frozen,
strode the wild man of Halberstadt,
As when Brennus the Gaul stalkt into the hall
where the Roman senators sat.
The Duke loves little speaking ; but he made
that day a speech
To those Twelve Apostles, as pregnant as any the
preacher can preach ;
For, “ You Twelve Apostles,” said he, “ for many
a year and a day
How is it that you have dared your Master to
disobey, —

Who bade you, '*ite per orbem*,' go about in the
 world where ye can,
 From city to city forever, succoring every man ?
 But you, yet unmoved by the mandate, you sloth-
 ful and rascally crew !
 Stand there stock-still, letting others be stript to
 give succor to you.
 Therefore, about your business ! down instantly
 all, and disperse !
 Comfort the needy ! circulate freely ! profit the
 universe !
 The better to serve which purpose, divinely or-
 dained from of old,
 I hereby will and command both ye and your ill-
 gotten gold
 To assume the shape of Rix-thalers ! ”

 The Apostles had nothing to say,
 As it seems, in defence of themselves. They at
 least were obliged to obey.
 At dawn they were down from their niches ; ere
 night on their mission they sped ;
 And the broken were bound up and healed, and
 the hungry were speedily fed.

This way Duke Christian affirmed, little heeding
 Apostles or Priests,
 That the first great need of a man is — *to feed* ;
 after the fashion of beasts !
 But, since even the beasts must work, Duke
 Christian thought, I suspect,
 If Apostles are made to work also, Apostles must
 n't object.

ELISABETTA SIRANI.*

1665.



JUST to begin, — and end ! so much, —
no more !

To touch upon the very point at last
Where life should cling : to feel the
solid shore

Safe ; where, the seething sea's strong toil o'er-
past,

Peace seemed appointed ; then, with all the store

Half-undivulged of the gleaned ocean cast,

Like a discouraged wave's, on the bleak strand,

Where what appeared some temple (whose glad

Priest

To gather ocean's sparkling gift should stand,

Bidding the wearied wave, from toil releast,

Sleep in the marble harbors bathed with bland

And quiet sunshine, flowing from full east

Among the laurels) proves the dull blind rock's

Fantastic front, — to die, a disallowed,

Dasht purpose : which the scornful shore-cliff
mocks,

Even as it sinks ; and all its wealth bestowed

In vain, — mere food to feed, perchance, stray flocks

Of the coarse sea-gull ! weaving its own shroud

Of idle foam, swift ceasing to be seen ! —

Sad, sad, my father ! . . . yet it comes to this.

For I am dying. All that might have been, —

* Suggested by Mr. T. A. Trollope's charming Biography ;
which completely disproves the old story of the poisoning.

That must have been ! the days, so hard
to miss,
So sure to come ! eyes, lips, that seemed to
lean

In on me at my work, and almost kiss
The curls bowed o'er it, lost ! O, never
doubt

I should have lived to know them all again,
And from the crowd of praisers single out

For special love those forms beheld so plain
Beforehand. When my pictures, borne about
Bologna, to the church doors, led their train
Of kindling faces, turned, as by they go,

Up to these windows, — standing at your side
Unseen, to see them, I (be sure !) should know

And welcome back those eyes and lips, desried
Long since in fancy : for I loved them so,

And so believed them ! Think ! Bo-
logna's pride
My paintings ! Guido Reni's mantle
mine ,

And I, the maiden artist, prized among
The masters, ah, that dream was too divine

For earth to realize ! I die so young,
All this escapes me ! God, the gift be thine,
Not man's, then better so ! That throbb-
ing throng

Of human faces fades out fast. Even yours,
Belovéd ones, the inexorable Fate

(For all our vowed affections !) scarce endures
About me. Must I go, then, desolate

Out from among you ? Nay, my work insures
Fit guerdon somewhere, — though the gift must
wait !

Had I lived longer, life would sure have set
Earth's gift of fame in safety. But I die.
Death must make safe the heavenly guerdon yet.
I trusted time for immortality, —
There was my error ! Father, never let
Doubt of reward confuse my memory !
Besides, — I have done much : and what is done
Is well done. All my heart conceived my hand
Made fast . . . mild martyr, saint, and weeping
nun,
And truncheoned prince, and warrior with bold
brand,
Yet keep my life upon them ; — as the sun,
Though fallen below the limits of the land,
Still sees on every form of purple cloud
His painted presence.

Flaring August's here,
September's coming. Summer's brodered shroud
Is borne away in triumph by the year :
Red Autumn drops, from all his branches bowed,
His careless wealth upon the costly bier.
We must be cheerful. Set the casement wide.
One last look o'er the places I have loved,
One last long look ! . . . Bologna, O my pride
Among thy palaced streets ! The days have
moved
Pleasantly o'er us. What has been denied
To our endeavor ? Life goes unproved.
To make the best of all things is the best
Of all means to be happy. This I know,
But cannot phrase it finely. The night's rest
The day's toil sweetens. Flowers are warmed
by snow.

18 *CHRONICLES AND CHARACTERS.*

All 's well God wills. Work out this grief. Joy's
zest

Itself is salted with a taste of woe.
There 's nothing comes to us may not be borne,
Except a too great happiness. But this
Comes rarely. Though I know that you will
mourn

The little maiden helpmate you must miss,
Thanks be to God, I leave you not forlorn.

There should be comfort in this dying kiss.
Let Barbara keep my colors for herself.

I 'm sorry that Lucia went away
In some unkindness. 'T was a cheerful elf!

Send her my scarlet ribbons, mother ; say
I thought of her. My palette 's on the shelf,
Surprised, no doubt, at such long holiday.

In the south window, on the easel, stands

My picture for the Empress Eleänore,
Still wanting some few touches, these weak hands
Must leave to others. Yet there 's time before

The year ends. And the Empress' own commands

You 'll find in writing. Barbara's brush is more
Like mine than Anna's ; let her finish it.

O, . . . and there 's 'Maso, our poor fisher-
man !

You 'll find my work done for him : something fit

To hang among his nets : you liked the plan

My fancy took to please our friend's dull wit,

Scarce brighter than his old tin fishing-can. . . .

St. Margaret, stately as a ship full sail,

Leading a dragon by an azure band ;

The ribbon flutters gayly in the gale :

The monster follows the Saint's guiding hand,

Wrinkled to one grim smile from head to tail :

For in his horny hide his heart grows bland.
— Where are you, dear ones ?

'T is the dull, faint chill,
Which soon will shrivel into burning pain !
Dear brother, sisters, father, mother — still
Stand near me ! While your faces fixt remain
Within my sense, vague fears of unknown ill
Are softly crowded out, and yet, 't is
vain !
Greet Giulio Banzi ; greet Antonio ; greet
Bartolomeo kindly. When I 'm gone,
And in the school-room, as of old, you meet, —
Ah, yes ! you 'll miss a certain merry tone,
A cheerful face, a smile that should complete
The vague place in the household picture grown
To an aspect so familiar, it seems strange
That aught should alter there. Mere life, at
least,
Could not have brought the shadow of a change
Across it. Safely the warm years increast
Among us. I have never sought to range,
From our small table at earth's general feast,
To higher places : never loved but you,
Dear family of friends, except my art :
Nor any form save those my pencil drew
E'er quivered in the quiet of my heart.
I die a maiden to Madonna true,
And would have so continued. There,
the smart,
The pang, the faintness !

Ever, as I lie
Here, with the Autumn sunset on my face,

And heavy in my curls (whilst it, and I,
 Together, slipping softly from the place
 We played in, pensively prepare to die)
 A low warm humming simmers in my ears, —
 Old summer afternoons ! faint fragments rise
 Out of my broken life at times appears
 Madonna, like a moon in mellow skies :
 The three Fates with the spindle and the shears :
 The Grand Duke Cosmo with the Destinies :
 St. Margaret with her dragon : fitful cheers
 Along the Via Urbana come and go :
 Bologna with her towers ! Then all grows
 dim,
 And shapes itself anew, softly and slow,
 To cloistered glooms through which the silver
 hymn
 Eludes the sensitive silence ; whilst below
 The southwest window, just one single, slim,
 And sleepy sunbeam powders with waved gold
 A lane of gleamy mist along the gloom,
 Whereby to find its way, through manifold
 Magnificence, to Guido Reni's tomb,
 Which, set in steadfast splendor, I behold.
 And all the while I scent the incense fume,
 Till dizzy grows the brain, and dark the eye
 Beneath the eyelid. When the end is come,
 There, by his tomb (our master's) let me lie,
 Somewhere, not too far off ; beneath the dome
 Of our own Lady of the Rosary :
 Safe, where old friends will pass ; and still near
 home !

RICHELIEU.

I.

THE POETS.

1.



ALL she-creatures that exist
Power can subdue,
Save the Muse, — that could resist
Cardinal Richelieu.

2.

He the War of Thirty Years
With his right hand led :
Struck the turbulent French peers,
With his left hand, dead.

3.

Mad-dog Luther loosed to bite
Emperor Charles and Rome :
But the Huguenots held tight,
Kennel-chained, at home.

4.

Greatest man of many great !
When to see him came
The Queen Mother, forced to wait,
Stood the royal dame :

5.

Round him he, with haughty mien
Rome's proud purple wrapped :
Trembling stood the barehead Queen :
Richelieu sat capped.

6.

Only little poets were
Gombault, Desmarets,
Colletet, and Boisrobert :
Yet, whenever they

7.

Came to see the Cardinal,
Each kept on his hat.
Proud as princes, one and all,
These small poets sat :

8.

And, while they in critic mood
Did his rhymes review,
Trembling and bareheaded stood
Cardinal Richelieu.

II.

THE THREE ESTATES.

1.

THE Cardinal to the Clergy cried,
"Six millions for the State!"
The Archbishop of Sens replied,
"God save the King! the great
And ancient rule hath been alway
That for the Public Good
The Clergy pray, the People pay,
The Nobles give their blood."

2.

"Good!" said the Spirit of the Age,
"Give and take is a doctrine sage."

3.

So, when the Royal Power had need
Of more than priestly prayer,
The Nobles for the Throne did bleed;
And then the Nobles were
The masters. When the Royal Power
Said to the People, "Pay!"
It was their dower that, from that hour,
The masters rested they.

4.

"Good!" saith the Spirit of the Age,
"Give and take is a doctrine sage."

III.

WALLENSTEIN'S DEATH.

WHEN Richelieu learned that Wallenstein was dead,
His thin face sharpened to an edge. He said,
“Soon as the great tree falls, the rabble run
To strip him of his branches one by one.”

THE DAUPHIN.



PALACE here, a People there,
Face to face i' the rainy air :
For the rain is raining heavily,
And the sick day shutting a bloodshot
eye.

The People, nowhere a while ago,
Now here, now there, now everywhere.
And, of all in the Palace, none doth know
Where the People may be, ere is done
This last of two disastrous days,
Now waning fast, with watery rays.
Quick, Fancy ! ere its light be gone,
From out of the many 't is darkening on
Save me a single face. This one.

Broidered of satin, as best befits,
Is the gilded chair where the urchin sits,
Whose grandsires all earth's greatest were
In grandeur, when the grand were great.
For the childhood of this child is heir
To monarchy's old age.

The late
Sunbeam, now sinking in his hair
(Weary of strife with a rainy sky),
Faintly, solemnly, lingers there
With a sorrowful glory, soon to die ;
As all things must, some day, when'er
Time disavows them : Time knows why.

O'er kingdoms twain thou wert born to reign,
 Bourbon child of the Hapsburg mother !
 Life's fairest, one ; and earth's, the other ;
 France, and Youth. Of all the train
 Of those the wondering world admires,
 Lords and Ladies, Knights and Squires,
 Long-robed Senator severe,
 Royal Duke, and Princely Peer, —
 They whose heads be Heads of France,
 To whom, with a sullen countenance,
 Hungry hundreds crook the knee,
 None but boweth the head to thee,
 Little child ! Whose face is one
 Of a group that all are gone.

For, since thou, O child, didst flee,
 Who knows where ? from human sight ;
 Never child, king-born, like thee,
 Hath been born to absolute right :
 Sons of kings no more can be
 Guaranteed, as thou wert then,
 Of the servitude of men.

Hearest thou the sounds outside ?
 Hearest thou the sounds within ?
 In the neighboring chamber Pride
 Stoops, in colloquy with Fear ;
 Mounier's loyal cares begin ;
 Prudence plucks at Lafayette ;
 Orleans with sulky stride
 Is philosophizing yet ;
 Chartres has Louis by the ear ;
 Necker rubs a ruminant chin.
 Outside in the twilight drear
 Swells the ominous surly din.

See ! the child is playing now
With his sister's silky tresses ;
To whose infantine white brow
Lips as white a mother presses.
Are not children safe from harm,
Circled by a mother's arm ?

In the chair where sits the child
Smiling, long since sat and smiled
Him men named the "Grand Monarque."
Ah, the light is fading dark !
Through the palace windows wide
What is still so dim descried
In the pale persistent rain ?

Is the deluge back again ?
And what wreckt world's groaning ark
There emits its monstrous train
To new-people earth with pain ?
Men or beasts ? What are they ? Mark !
Seest thou ? hearest thou, little child ?
Haggard faces ; women wild ;
Men red-handed, blood-defiled ;
Heroism, and Hope, and Hate,
Hunger, Horror, Wrath, and Crime,
Mingling in the march of Fate,
Life's grotesque with Love's sublime ;
Ragged wretches grim and stark,
Smiling as they never smiled
Till this moment ; jaw of shark
Gaping at a drowning ship ;
Eye of tiger ; lion's grip ;
Stormy starvelings, smutcht and soiled,
Thick through garden, court, and park,

Round that palace terrace-piled,
 Teeming, tossing, trampling . . . Hark !
 First a growl, and then a howl,
 Voice of a vast tormented soul,
 And then a shrill heart-breaking bark,
 And now an immense murderous roar,
 Nearer, drearer, more and more, —
 The famisht wild beast's roar for bread !
 Suddenly the child's hand ceased
 Its sport among the tiny tresses
 Of the little golden head
 Backward bent to its caresses ;
 All those tumbled curls released ;
 While the pouting child-lips said,
 "MOTHER, I AM HUNGRY !"

Cry

Of the Poor man's child, supprest
 In a People's starving breast,
 For so many wicked years !
 Cry, no law could longer smother
 In the lawless, lifeless past !
 By what strange revenge of chance
 Didst thou thus ascend so high,
 From what depths of woe upcast,
 As to smite the heart of a mother,
 Heard in the unwilling ears
 Of a listening Queen of France,
 From a Dauphin's lips at last ?

END OF BOOK VIII.

BOOK IX.

HERE AND THERE.

ROMANCES AND BALLADS.

“L’histoire ne commence, et ne finit, nulle part.”

LOUIS BLANC.



ATLANTIS.

1.



O greet the young Atlantis of the West
Strange gifts the Monarchs of the Old
World sent :

The sighings of the hearts of their oppressed,

Howlings and hungers of their hungriest,
And many a trampled truth, and foiled intent
And pining hope erewhile in prison pent,
Half-starving bodies and sore-stricken souls,
And every wretchedness the deep unrest
That shakes the sad shores of the Old World rolls
Ever and anon to drown in gulfs unguest, —
The wrecks of Time ! And all these ruined things
The Witch-Queen of the Oceanides .
Shaped into glorious forms of crownéd kings ;
And to their sorrows gave she sovereignties
Upon the frontiers of the Future Time ;
Where they sit throned, judging the Old World's
crime.

2.

Yet did the Old World plague her on this wise :
Into the cradle of her childhood's sleep
It dropt a serpent's egg. And, ere her eyes
Were opened, forth did the hatched reptile creep,

And breed a venomous brood of tyrannies,
 Sloths, usurpations, ignominies, lies ;
 Which her yet infant force, by fear, did keep
 Subservient to their wicked witcheries.
 These, when she stronger waxed, and strove to rise
 And set her foot upon the viperous heap
 Of their infernal progeny, were wise
 In the old wisdom of their Serpent Sire,
 And, taught by Satan, tempted her desire
 Of Power, — to palter and to compromise
 With Profit, — by their poison-pouches brewed
 From human blood in human flesh black-hued,
 So that the Angel in her droopt his wing,
 And sank into a sick and sullen swoond ;
 And Gold was made her God, and Cain her King,
 And Crime the crown wherewith her head was
 crowned.

Until her reptile rulers waxed secure
 Of Sin's success, and passed the bitter bound
 Of what God's patience suffers man to endure ;
 Spat on the cheek their kiss had left impure,
 Beat her, and left her bare to her distress.
 But, hardier than the hooted lioness
 When the net breaks, — stern mother of strong
 times,

She leapt to lordly life, and rolled around
 The lustrous orbs of her indignant scorn,
 And rent her coward compact with the crimes
 Of the Old World ; which, deeming her forlorn
 In that surpassing pang wherein she found
 Surpassing strength, glad of man's loss, stood by,
 With spleenful sneer, and supercilious eye,
 Scribbling on time's loose sands with crooked staff
 Anticipations of her epitaph.

For, fooled by its own wishful hate, it deemed
 Those pangs of her transcendent Second-Birth
 To be the desperate death-throes of what seemed
 Her last wild hour. And the old kings o' the earth
 Mocked with their pointed sceptres, and made mirth.

3.

Then, in the dark of her shaken star's eclipse,
 She caught and clung to that Omnipotent Hand
 Which whoso holds stands fast, nor ever slips
 Or strays, though darkness be on sea and land.
 And Strength was given to her from Heaven, when

Power

Proffered by Hell she spurned: strength to with-
 stand

And stand. In that apocalyptic hour
 Her might was inexhaustible by man
 (Even as the mythic horn, which ever flowed,
 Because the illimitable ocean
 Forever at one end thereof abode),
 For through her frame those heavenly forces ran
 Whose fountain-head is the Eternal God.
 Her fervid foot with fiery purpose shod
 (Forged by strong Faith) the formidable field
 Of frenzied Opposition firmly trod;
 Though oft repulsed, returning oft, to yield
 Of Freedom's heritage no hallowed sod:
 Nor ever drowsed she on her battle shield,
 Till her supreme spear, red with traitorous blood,
 Had slain the Serpent and his rebel brood.

4.

A Queen she is, though round her forehead shines
 No semblance of the circlet of a crown;

VOL. II.

Save what rare promise of rich sunrise twines
 In her wild hair from splendors of its own.
 High in the heaven of human hope her throne
 Rises remote from us, whose orb declines
 Down the dark slope of time, — remote and lone
 In solitary light, as when afar
 A crimson cloud, the pent sun's stormy zone,
 Brightens the welkin ; and belated signs
 Are setting, and a sudden breeze is blown
 About the shuddering stillness of the dawn :
 Some sleep a heavy sleep, with curtain drawn
 And shutter fast against whatever beams
 Visit the dark ; and unto them dawn's star
 Is even as though it were not : some there are
 That see and fear it ; unto whom it seems
 A portent prophesying woful war,
 And ruin to the world whereon it gleams,
 The falling of long-fixéd faiths, the jar
 Of jostled thrones, the flowing forth of streams
 Whose fury Law's old limitary bar
 Shall stem no more, the unsoldering of old schemes,
 And foundering of old fabrics, splint and spar,
 And trampling of tumultuary extremes
 Which man's mild golden middle way shall mar :
 But some, though few, that dreamed of it in dreams,
 And waked, believing, with unwearied eyes
 To watch for the illumining of dark skies,
 What time the skies were darkest, hail the sight
 As haply herald of a long-wisht light.

5.

Little she heeds our welcome or our scorn.
 The title-deeds of her immense command
 She sues not from the signing of our hand.

Great Nature signed them when her child was born.
Great Nature guards them. They shall not be torn
From Nature's grasp. The inviolable land
Into whose spacious lap her affluent horn
Showers more wealth than e'er the unvalued sweat
Of serf and villain did of old beget
From the wronged earth, to appease the discontent
Of murderous monarchies whose names are yet
On palaces and temples opulent,
She holds by Nature's, not by our, consent.
Her foot is on the Serpent she hath slain.
The wound is in her bosom, where he bit.
The red blood blossoms, as it drips from it,
To flowers that flourish best on battle plain ;
Which, being pluckt, for sudden cures are fit ;
Whose biting juices purge out many a stain.
Her cheek is flusht with fervor, not with pain.
Her eyes are beacon lights by Freedom lit.
And her strong forehead is severely knit
By somewhat of a newly learned disdain
For the much mockery of our little wit.
About the fillet of her brows is writ
HUMANITY, — sad word, oft sighed in vain
By weary lips of wretches doomed to sit
Counting the links of Custom's cruel chain :
But on those lips of hers the sound thereof
Is even as though all laughers that had lain
(Frozen by old Unwisdom's wintry scoff)
Long mute in Nature's mighty heart leapt free
To join a new world's general jubilee.

6.

We, clinging to the present, in our fear
To front the future, miss the joy of both.

We praise the past, with praises insincere,
 For what its loudest eulogists are loth
 To emulate; whose supercilious sloth
 Plays off, with hollow commendations drear,
 The virtues and the valors that have ceased
 To shape the conduct of mankind's career
 Against whatever lives in living breast
 Of virtue and of valor, striving *here*,
 And striving *now*, to help man's imminent need,
 And honor passéd worth by present deed.
 We chuckle when they fall, who fight — or sink,
 Who soar — or stumble, who strain forward still.
 We know not what to do, nor what to think,
 Save only to do nothing, and think ill
 Of all things done. We peep about the brink
 Of the full-flowing river of time, until
 Some waning moon's wan influence, to fulfil
 Our feeble hope, do chance to suck and shrink
 The torrent wave we have not strength nor skill
 Either to pass, or turn what way we will.
 The winds of change afflict us. What to-day
 We tether tight to-morrow whirls away.
 That which our faith affirms our fear denies.
 Our conscience cries to our convenience Nay.
 The tides of things are flowing otherwise
 Than with their wills on whom our doubt relies.
 Their prophesyings Fate's fierce facts gainsay,
 And Time's swift wisdom their slow wit belies,
 Whose master is unmerciful surprise,
 And their sad task impossible delay.

7.

Therefore the ardors and the heats, that here
 No flames enkindle from our altars cold,

The hopes which our inhospitable fear
Hoots into houseless space, — the manifold
Enthusiasms Love sends forth to cheer
Each lusty champion that gives battle bold
In his glad cause, — the meanings and the aims
That move the mighty disk of Circumstance,
And that strong demiurgic faith, that frames
Foundations deeper than the drifts of chance,
Escape us, — in the striving of the soul
Of poets, and the thinking of the thought
Of sages, and the yearning to its goal
Of that endeavoring Impulse which hath brought
All things to what they are, nor pauses ever
Half-way to what they shall be ; whose endeavor
Undoes our deedless doings. And all these
Are made the servants of the Destinies,
Which, being our despots, are her ministers ;
Who dips in the dim light of setting suns
The spacious skirts of that vast robe of hers
That widens ever in the wondrous West :
But on her sceptre shines the morning star,
Whereto she sings mysterious orisons.
In her large lap Jove's Bird hath built his nest ;
And the great Ocean Stream orbicular
Goeth about to girdle her strong breast,
Whereto the nursling hopes of Time are prest.

8.

A mightier wrong than the remorseless Greek,
In the sad decad of the woes of Troy,
Revenged what time he did his angers wreak
On gray-haired Priam and his Phrygian boy,
A loftier scorn than that of Thetis' son,

With nobler sword, redressed on fiercer field :
 A fairer prize than Helen's beauty won ;
 A haughtier foe than Hector forced to yield ;
 And left a theme, for larger Iliads fit
 Than Homer sung, in legends yet unwrit.

9.

Then came the Old World's monarchs ; who had
 sought
 (Hoping that Hell might over Heaven prevail)
 To crown the infernal foe wherewith she fought,
 What time the fight was dubious, — crying, " All
 hail,
 Most sovereign lady ! since thou didst not fail
 In battle such as never was before,
 Since when the Titans did the Gods assail.
 For now thou art the Goddess we adore
 (Long vowed to lift not whatsoever veil
 Her Godhood wears), whose title is *SUCCESS*.
 Therefore be witness of our willingness
 To give thee welcome ! "

 But she answered not :
 Who then was musing on man's faith in what
 Her faith had won for man — *FUTURITY*.
 That war was not as theirs, earth's anarchs old,
 Mere barbarous battle for most brutal gain,
 The slave's affliction and the tyrant's joy,
 The making, not the breaking, of the chain
 Which Hell's *Ambition* in his hand doth hold : —
 But, for all human faith in human worth ;
 For man's most outraged hope in heavenly things ;
 For those high aspirations that go forth,
 The holy souls of human sufferings,

To gladden God ; for our afflicted Earth
And our forgotten Heaven ; for whatsoe'er
Redeems the Past, making the Future fair,
The Present blameless ; for the black man's flesh,
The white man's spirit ; for Freedom, fluttering,
Caught in her first flight by the fowler's mesh,
With sullied feather and with broken wing ;
For all sublime Ideas that cry to God,
Buried alive beneath earth's clumsy clod
Of sullen fact ; and every noble thought ; —
For these, not only for herself, she fought !
And theirs her victory is, not hers alone :
For they to help her in the conflict wrought.
Where'er the oppressor trembles at the groan
Of the opprest ; wherever Truth is taught
To challenge Falsehood with undaunted tone ;
Wherever a slave is made into a man,
And that man's flesh and blood are made his own ;
Where what a poet dreams a people can
Resolve to achieve ; wherever what hath been
A wish — scarce even a hope — in ages gone,
Begins to be a certainty clear-seen ;
Wherever Justice widens Freedom's span ;
Wherever right for all is wrong to none,
And fear in many is not force in one ;
Wherever life assumes a lovelier mien ;
Wherever Conscience is crowned Custom's Queen ;
Wherever good believed is good begun ; —
The everlasting trophies she hath won
Shall stand unshaken by the storms of time,
Deep as man's heart, and as man's hope sublime.

MISERY.

I.



T WAS neither day nor night, but both
 together
 Mixed in a muddy smudge of London
 weather,
 And the dull pouring of perpetual
 Dim rain was vague, and vast, and over all.

She strayed on through the rain, and through the
 mud,
 That did the slop-fed filmy city flood,
 Meekly unmindful as are wretches, who,
 Accustomed to discomfortings, pursue
 Their paths scarce conscious of the more or less
 Of misery mingled with each day's distress.
 Albeit the ghostly rag, too thin to call
 Even the bodily remnant of a shawl
 (Mere heaps of holes to one another stitched),
 That tightly was about her shoulders twitched,
 As, at each step, the fretful cough, in vain
 By its vexed victim checked, broke loose again,
 And shivered through it, dripping drop by drop,
 Contrived the flaccid petticoat to sop
 With the chill surcharge of its oozy welt.

The mud was everywhere. It seemed to melt
 Out of the grimy houses, trickling down
 Those brick-work blocks that at each other frown,
 Unsociable, though squeezed and jammed so close

Together ; all monotonously morose,
 And claiming each, behind his iron rail,
 The smug importance of a private jail.
 It seemed to stuff the blurred and spongy sky ;
 To clog the slimy streets ; and fiercely try
 To climb the doorsteps ; blind with spattered filth
 The dismal lamps ; and spew out its sick spilth
 At unawares, from hiding-places, known
 In dark street-corners to its spite alone.
 She strayed on through the mud : 't was nothing
 new :

And through the rain — the rain ? it was mud too !
 The woman still was young, and Nature meant,
 Doubtless, she should be fair ; but that intent
 Hunger, in haste, had marred, or toil, or both.
 There was no color in the quiet mouth,
 Nor fulness ; yet it had a ghostly grace
 Pathetically pale. The thin young face
 Was interpenetrated tenderly
 With soft significance. The warm brown eye,
 And warm brown hair, had gentle gleams. Per-
 chance

Those gracious tricks of gesture and of glance,
 Those dear and innocent arts, — a woman's ways
 Of wearing pretty looks, and winning praise, —
 The pleasantness of pleasing, and the skill,
 Were native to this woman, — woman still,
 Though woman withered. There's a last degree
 Of misery that is sexless wholly. She
 Was yet what ye are, mothers, sisters, wives,
 That are so sweet and lovely in our lives ; —
 A woman still, for all her withered look,
 Even as a faded flower in a book
 Is still a flower.

II.

Dark darker grows. The lamps
Of London, flaring through the foggy damp,
Glare up and down the gray streets ghostily,
And the long roaring of loud wheels rolls by.
The huge, hump-shouldered bridge is reached.

She stops.

The shadowy stream beneath it slides and drops
With sulky sound between the arches old.

She eyed it from the parapet. The cold
Clung to her, creeping up the creepy stream.
The enormous city, like a madman's dream,
Full of strange hummings and unnatural glare,
Beat on her brain. Some Tempter whispered,
"There,

Is quiet, and an end of long distress.
Leap down ! leap in ! One anguish more or less
In this tense tangle of tormented souls
God keeps no strict account of. The stream rolls
Forever and forever. Death is swift,
And easy."

Then soft shadows seemed to lift
Long arms out of the streaming dark below,
Woingly waving to her.

But, ah no,
Ah no ! She is still afraid of them to-night,
Those plausible familiars ! Die ? What right
Is hers to die ? — a mother, and a wife,
Whose love hath given hostages to life !

The voices of the shadows make reply :

“ Woman, no right to live is right to die.
What right to live, — which means, what right to
eat

(What thou hast ceased to earn) the bread and
meat

That’s not enough for all, — what unearned right
Hast thou to say, ‘ *I choose to live?* ’ ”

With might
The mocking shadows mounted, as they spoke,
Nearer, and clearer; and their voices broke
Into a groan that mingled with the roar
Of London, growing louder evermore
With multitudes of moanings from below,
Mysterious, wrathful, miserable.

“ Ah no,
Ah no! For Willie waits for me at home,
And will not sleep all night till I am come.
’T is late . . . but there were hopes of work to
do :

I waited . . . though in vain. Ah, if he knew!
And how to meet to-morrow? ” . . .

A drunken man
Stumbled against her, stared, and then began
To troll a tavern stave, with husky voice
(The subject coarse, the language strong, not
choice),

And humming reeled away.

Up streamed again
The voices of the shadows, in disdain :

“ A mother? and a wife? Ill-gotten names,
Filched from earth’s blisses to increase its shames!
What right have breadless mothers to give birth
To breadless babies? Children, meant for mirth,

She murmured, "even so! and yet dear heart,
I meant to comfort thee!" Then, with a start:
"And he is sick, poor man! No work to-day
No work to-morrow And the rent to
pay
And two small mouths to feed!"

As plump as Puck, at all things and themselves
Laughing, ran by her in the rain. They were
Chubby, and rosy-cheeked, with golden hair,
Tossing behind : two girls, a boy : they held
Each other's hands, and so contrived to weld
Their gladnesses in one. No rain, though chill,
Could vex their joyous ignorance of ill.
Then, sorrowfully, her thoughts began to stray
Far out of London, many a mile away
Among the meadows :

Hosted by Google

Beneath, is sprinkled with the o'erblown leaves
 Of wild white roses. In the long, long eves
 The cuckoo calls from every glimmering bower
 And lone dim-lighted glade. The small church
 tower

Smiles kindly at the village underneath.
 Ah God ! once more to smell the rose's breath
 Among those cottage gardens ! There 's a field
 Past the hill-farm, hard by the little weald,
 Was first to fill with cowslips every year ;
 The children used to play there. Could one hear
 Once more that merry brook that leaves the leas
 Quiet at eve, but through the low birch-trees
 Is ever noisy ! Then, at nutting time
 The woods are gayer than even in their prime,
 And afterwards, there 's something, hard to tell,
 Full of home-feelings in the healthy smell
 Wide over all the red ploughed uplands spread
 From burning weeds, what time the woods are
 dead.

" We were so young ! we loved each other so !
 Ah yet, if one could live the winter
 through !
 And winter's worst is o'er in March who
 knows ?
 The times might mend."

 Then through her thoughts uprose
 The menacing image of the imminent need
 Of this bleak night.

 " Two little mouths to feed !
 No work ! and Willie sick ! and
 how to pay
 To-morrow's rent ? "

She plucked herself away
 From the bewildering river ; and again
 Strayed onwards, onwards, through the endless rain
 Among the endless streets, with weary gait,
 And dreary heart, trailing disconsolate
 A draggled skirt with feeble feet slipshod.
 The sky seemed one vast blackness without God,
 Or, if a god, a god like some that here
 Be gods of earth, who, missing love, choose fear
 For henchman, and so rule a multitude
 They have subdued, but never understood.
 The roaring of the wheels began anew.
 And London down its dismal vortex drew
 This wandering minim of the misery
 Of millions.

III.

Gray and grisly, 'neath this sky
 Of bitter darkness, gleamed the long blind wall
 Of that grim institute we English call
 The Poor-House.

We build houses for our poor,
 Pay poor-rates, — do our best, indeed, to cure
 Their general sickness by all special ways,
 If not successful, still deserving praise,
 Because implying (which, for my part, I
 Applaud intensely) that society
 Is answerable, as a whole, to man, —
 Ay, and to Christ, since self-styled Christian !
 For how the poor it brings to birth may fare ;
 Though some French folks count this in chief the
 affair
 Of Government, which pays for its mistakes

To Revolution, when grim Hunger breaks
 His social fetter sometimes. Still, remains
 This fact, a sad one : — 'spite of all our pains,
 The poor increase among us faster still
 Than means to feed them, though we tax the till
 To cram the alms-box. Which is passing strange,
 Seeing that this England in the world's wide range
 Ranks wealthiest of the nations of the earth.
 But thereby hangs a riddle which is worth
 The solving some day, if we can. That's all.

This woman, passing by that Poor-House wall,
 Shuddered, and thought . . . no matter ! 't was *a*
thought
Only that made her shudder, — till she caught
 Her foot against a heap of something strange,
 And wet, and soft ; which made that shudder
 change
 To one of physical terror.

'T was as though
 The multitudinous mud, to scare her so,
 Had heaped itself into a hideous heap,
 Not human sure, but living. With a creep
 The thing, whate'er it was, her chance foot spurned,
 Began to move ; like humid earth upturned
 By a snouted mole, disturbed ; or else, — suppose
 A swarm of feeding flies, when clustered close
 About a lump of carrion, or a hive
 Of brown-backed bees. It seemed to be alive
 After this fashion. A collective mass
 Of movement, making from the life it has,
 Or seems to have, in common, though so small,
 A sort of monstrous individual.

For, from the inward to the outward moved,
 The hideous lump heaved slowly ; slowly shoved
 Layer after layer of soaked and rotting rags
 On each side, down it, to the sloppy flags
 Beneath its headless bulk ; thus making space
 For the upthrusting of the creature's face,
 Or creature's self, whate'er that might have been.
 Whence, suddenly emerging, — to be seen,
 One must imagine, rather than to see,
 Since it looked nowhere, neither seemed to be
 Surprised, or even conscious, — there was thrust
 (As though it came up thus because it must,
 And not because it would) a human head,
 With sexless countenance, that neither said
 To man, nor woman " I belong to you,"
 But seemed a fearful mixture of the two
 United in a failure horrible
 Of features, meant for human you might tell
 By just so much as their lean wolfishness
 Contrived more intense meaning to express
 Than hunger-heated eye or snarling jaw
 Of any real wolf.

Stricken with awe,

The woman, only very poor indeed,
 Recoiled before that creature past all need,
 And past all help, too, being past all hope.
 For, stern and stark, against the stolid cope
 Of the sad, rainy, and enormous night,
 That sexless face had fixed itself upright
 At once, and, as it were, mechanically,
 With no surprise ; as much as to imply
 That it had done with this world everywhere,
 And henceforth looked to Heaven : yet looked not
 there

With any sort of hope, or thankfulness
 For things expected, but in grim distress,
 From the mere wont of gazing constantly
 On darkness.

London's Life went roaring by,
 And took no notice of this thing at all.
 It seemed a heap of mud against the wall.
 And if it were a vagrant . . . well? why, there
 The Poor-House stands. The thing is *its* affair,
 Not yours, nor mine; who pay the rates when due,
 And trust in God, as all good Christians do.
 And yet, — if you or I had passed that way,
 And noticed (which we did not do, I say.
 Not ours the fault!) the creature crouching there,
 I swear to you, O Brother, and declare
 For my part, on my conscience, that, although
 I never yet was so opprest, I know,
 By instant awe of any king or queen,
 Prelate, or prince, whate'er the chance hath been,
 As to have felt my heart's calm beating stopped,
 Or my knees falter, yet I must have dropped
 (Ay, and you too, friend whom my heart knows
 well!)

In presence of that unapproachable
 Appalling Majesty of Misery;
 Lifting its pale-faced protest to the sky
 Silently against you, and me, no doubt,
 And all the others of this social rout
 That calls itself fine names in modern books.

IV.

The woman, stone-cold 'neath the stony looks
 Of this rag-robed Medusa, shrank away

Abasht; not daring, at the first, to say
Such words as, meant for comfort, might have
been

Too much like insult to that grim-faced Queen,
Or King, whiche'er it was, of Wretchedness.
Her own much misery seemed so much less
Than this, flung down before her, — by God sent,
It may have been, for her admonishment.
But, at the last, she timidly drew near
And whispered faintly in the creature's ear,
“Have you no home?”

No look even made reply,
Much less a word. But on the stolid sky
The stolid face stared ever.

“Are you cold?”

A sort of inward creepy movement rolled
The rustled rags. And still the stolid face
Perused the stolid sky. Perhaps the case
Supposed was too self-evident to claim
More confirmation than what creeping came
To crumble those chill rags; subsiding soon,
As though to be unnoticed were a boon,
All kinds of notice having proved unkind.
Such creatures as men hunt are loath to find
The hole discovered where they hide; and, when
By chance you stir them out of it, they then
Make haste to feign to be already dead,
Hoping escape that way.

The woman said
More faintly, “Are you hungry?”

There, at once
Finding intensest utterance for the nonce,
With such a howl 't would chill your blood to hear
The wolf-jaws wailed out, “Hungry? ha, look
here!”

And therewith, fingers of a skeleton claw
 Tearing asunder those foul rags, you saw
 Was it a woman's breast? It might be so.
 It looked like nothing human that I know.
 She, whose faint question such shrill response
 woke,
 Stood stupefied, stunned, sick.

v.

 Just then there broke
 Down the dim street (and any sound just then,
 Shaped from the natural utterance of men,
 To still that echoed howl, had brought relief
 To her sick senses) a loud shout "Stop
 thief!
 Stop thief!"

 A man rushed by those women, — rushed
 So vehemently by them, that he brushed
 Their raggedness together, — as he passed,
 Dropped something on the pavement, — and was
 fast

Wrapped in the rainy vapors of the night,
 That, in a moment, smeared him out of sight,
 And, in a moment after, let emerge
 The trampling crowd; which, all in haste to urge
 Its honest chase, swept o'er those women twain,
 Regardless, and rushed on into the rain,
 Leaving them both, upon the slippery flags,
 Bruised, trampled, — rags in colloquy with rags,
 And so, — alone.

vi.

 Meanwhile the wolfish face,
 Resettled to its customary place,

Was staring as before, into the sky,
 Stolid. The other woman heavily
 Gathered herself together, bruised, in pain,
 Half rose up, slipped on something, and again
 Sank feebly back upon her hand.

But now
 What new emotion shakes her? Doth she know
 What this is, that her fingers on the stone
 Have felt, and, feeling, close so fiercely on?
 This pocket-book? with gold enough within
 To feed Alas! and must it be a sin
 To keep it? Were it possible to pay
 With what its very robber flings away
 For bread bread! bread! and still
 not starve, yet still
 Be honest!

“Were one doing very ill
 If One should pray if one *could* pray,
 that’s sure,
 The strength would come at last. We are so
 poor!
 So poor ’t is terrible! To understand
 Such things, one should be learned, and have at
 hand
 Ever so many good religious books,
 And texts, and things. And then one starves.
 It looks
 So like a godsend. What does the Book say
 About ‘the lions, roaring, seek their prey’?
 And the young ravens? ‘Ye are more than these.’
 Ah, but one starves, though!”

Crouched upon her knees,
 She dragged herself up close against the wall,
 And counted the gold pieces.

“Food for all ?

Us four ? And *that* makes five. The rent to pay
To-morrow ? Father, give me strength, to pray
Thy will be done ! What, if it *were* his will
That one should keep it, since one finds it ?

Still

Have bread to eat ? till one can work, of
course.

Why else should God have sent it ? Which is
worse

To starve, or 'T is as long as it is broad.

And then, consider this, I pray, dear God !

Two little mouths already, and no bread.

And my poor man this three days sick in bed.

And no more needle-work, it seems, for me

Till times turn round. Who knows when that will
be ?

Ah, and consider yet again. That 's four

To feed already. Then a *fifth* ? One more !

However can we eke it out ? Ah me,

God's creatures to be left like this ! Just see

How thin she is ! ”

Her hands about the thing

They clutched began to twitch. Still fingering

The gold convulsively, again she thought,

Or tried to think, of lessons early taught,

Easy to learn once, in the village school,

When to be honest seemed the simple rule

For being happy ; and of many a text

That tasked old Sundays ; growing more perplexed,

As, more and more, her giddy memory made

Haphazard catches at the words.

“ Who said,

‘ Therefore I say unto you ’ (ah ! 't were sweet)

‘Have no thought for your lives, what ye shall eat’

(If that were possible!) — ‘nor what to wear’?
Have no thought? that should mean, then, have no care!

‘Your Father knoweth of what things ye need
Before ye ask’ ‘The morrow shall take heed

For its own things’? And still, ’t is sure
he bade

The people pray, ‘Give us our daily bread.’

And elsewhere ‘Ask, and ye shall have’

“And yet

One starves, I say.

“Ay! They that have shall get.
That’s somewhere, too, and nearer fact, no doubt.
If the rich knew what the poor go without
Sometimes! They do their best for us, that’s sure.
But still, the poor they are so very poor!
‘Whoever giveth to the least of these

Giveth to me’? Why one can give with
ease

What is one’s own when *anything*’s one’s
own!

Ha! whose is this? There is no owner known.

God sent it here. Whose is it *now*?”

She stopped,
And trembled. And the tempting treasure dropped
From her faint hand.

She snatched it up again,
And cried, “Mine! mine! be it the Devil’s gain
Or God’s good gift! Sure, what folks must, folks
may,
And folks must live.”

She gazed out every way
 Along the gloomy street. In desert land
 To tempted saints mankind was more at hand
 Than now it seemed to this poor spirit pent
 In populous city.

VII.

Hurriedly, she bent
 Above her grim companion, in whose ear
 She muttered, hoarse and quick . . . " Make
 haste ! see here.
 There 's bread enough for all of us. Get up !
 Quick ! quick ! and come away. To-night we 'll sup,
 To-morrow we 'll not starve . . . another day,
 Another . . . and then, let come what come may !
 Off ! off ! "

No answer.

To the stolid sky
 The stolid face was turned immovably.
 The sky was dark : the face was dark. The face
 And sky were silent both : you could not trace
 The faintest gleam of light in the dark look
 Of either.

Vehemently the woman shook
 That miserable mass of rags. It let
 Itself be shaken : did not strive to get
 Up, or away : said naught. A worried rat
 So lets itself be shaken by a cat
 Or mastiff, when the vermin's back, 't is clear,
 Is snapped, and there 's no more to feel, or fear.
 " O haste ! "

No answer.

" It is late . . . late ! come ! "

No answer.

Those lean jaws were locked and dumb.

Then o'er the *living* woman's face there spread
Death's hue reflected.

“Late! . . . too late!” she said.
“O Heaven, to die *thus!*”

With a broken wail
She turned, and fled fast, fast.

Fled whither?

VIII.

Pale
Through the thick vagueness of the vaporous night,
From the dark alley, with a clouded light
Two rheumy, melancholy lampions flare.
They are the eyes of the Police.

In there,
Down the dark archway, through the greasy door,
Passionately pushing past the three or four
Complacent constables that clustered round
A costermonger, in the gutter found
Incapably, but combatively, drunk,
The woman hurried. Through the doorway slunk
A peaky pinched-up child with frightened face,
Important witness in some murder case
About to come before the magistrate
To-morrow. At a dingy table sat
The slim Inspector, spectacled, severe,
Rapidly writing.

In a sort of fear
Of seeing it again, she shut her eyes
And flung it down there. With sedate surprise
The man looked up.

“Because I do not know
The owner, sir” . . . she said. “A while ago

I found it. And there's money in it . . . much,
O, so much money, sir ! ”

A hungry touch
Of the defeated Tempter made her wince
To see him count it. Such a short while since
She, too, had done the same.

“ Your name ? address ? ”
She gave them. Easy, from the last to guess
Their wretchedness who dwelt in such a place !
The shrewd and practised eye perused her face
Contented, not surprised ; for they that see
Crime oftenest, oftenest, too, see honesty
Where most of us would seldom look for it,
Or find it with surprise . . . in rags, to wit.

“ Honest and poor. Deserves a large reward.
No doubt there 'll be one.”

“ Ah, the times are hard,
So hard, God help us all ! and, sir, indeed
We are so poor. Two little mouths to feed.
If one could only get some work to do ! ”

“ Ah . . . married ? out of work ? and children ?
two ?
Mem. Let the owner know, if found. Good
night.”

But still she stood there. He had turned to write.
She stood, and eyed him with a dreary eye,
And did not move. He looked up presently.
“ Not gone, yet ? eh ? what more ? ”

“ And, sir ” she said,
“ There ’s by the Workhouse wall a woman
dead.

There was no room within, sir, I suppose.
There are so many of them. Heaven knows
’T is hard for such as we to understand
How such things happen in a Christian land.”

Her face twitched, and her cough grew fierce again,
As she passed out into the night and rain.

MELANCHOLIA.

AFTER ALBERT DÜRER.

I.



NOT in lone wastes, nor by the desert sea,
But aye in sound of ceaseless human
moan,
By populous shores where wealthy cities
be,

The deep-eyed Melancholy dwells alone :
Her elbow large is based on her broad knee ;
An iron-claspéd volume hath she thrown
Athwart her hollow ample lap ; but she
Doth neither read, nor even look, therein ;
Whose eyes with innermost intensity
Burn outward ; her shut hand props her upslanted
chin.

II.

Her vesture vast, of watchet hue, the mould
Of her strong limbs from lap to foot doth heap
In many a massive fall, and rigid fold ;
And all unmoved the mighty hem doth sleep
Flat on the chilly floor. Her hair down rolled,
With unregarded curl, doth thinly creep
O'er her stooped shoulder. Heavy from the hold
Of her firm girdle hang full many keys :
For she to Power is porteress, and doth keep
The locked and guarded gates of mightiest mon-
archies.

III.

Crownéd she is with the first-budded leaves
 Of Spring, that putteth forth delightful things ;
 But her knit brow beneath her garland grieves :
 Folded about her back with eagle wings
 Half spread for flight ; but her strong body cleaves
 Unto the toilful earth. The wealth of kings
 Is at her feet, but of her eye receives
 No notice : it is hers : she heeds it not.
 Her labor lieth around her ; measurings,
 Plans, shapes, globe, solid, plank, adze, plane, and
 melting-pot.

IV.

Her foot is on the hammer and the saw ;
 Her hand is on the compass ; and she waits.
 Who knoweth what mighty circle she will draw ?
 What calculation vast she meditates ?
 A lean wolf-hound, hard-by, with doubled paw,
 Snores on the flint ; her creature tired, that sates
 (Stretching at her firm foot his shaggy jaw),
 In slumber deep, deep animal weariness.
 But never his great Spirit-Queen abates
 Her intellectual watch, and strenuous sleeplessness.

V.

Because this Melancholy is, indeed,
 The mightiest maker underneath the sun.
 Yet never shall be satisfied the need
 Of her deep heart, nor her long tasks be done.
 Sorrow and strength are hers : and she doth feed
 With infinite labor infinite longing. None

That know her ever shall from toil be freed.
Rest is not hers to give ; but in her hand
Dominion hangs, and sorrows, that have won
Great battles, harnessed wait upon her stern com-
mand.

VI.

And some, beholding her with woful eyes,
Have said, " This is Our Lady of Desire
That, feeding earth, doth hunger for the skies,
Full-fatal is her kiss, and fraught with fire.
Know her not." Others, " Nay, but she is wise,
Strong, patient, and of toil doth never tire.
Sad is she, certes ; but her inmost sighs
Are the strong souls of deeds. She is her own
Employer, and doth nothing serve for hire.
Therefore this Melancholy is most worthy to be
known."

VII.

Above, a hollow bell doth hang i' the beam ;
Therefrom a rope. O'er one of her large wings
Upon the shadowy wall a sullen scheme
Is faintly traced of careful numberings.
Near which, above the other wing, doth gleam
A livid hourglass that, unmarked, down flings
His measured sands in small monotonous stream.
Death creeps, and peeps into her deep Endeavor ;
Time, mocking, saith, " Thou makest glorious
things
For my unmaking." She, not answering, museth
ever.

VIII.

And on an old millstone that leans hard by
 The head of the unmindful Melancholy,
 With little wings, the Cherub Infancy
 Sits conning her great lesson, meek and lowly ;
 Across whose small upgathered knees doth lie
 An open tablet that is covered wholly
 With his first lore. There hangeth from on high
 A brazen balance. Slowly stealeth down
 The night wherein can no man work, and slowly
 The seas and skies grow dark about the distant
 town.

IX.

There, heavily, across the troubled night
 A warning comet trails her hideous hair,
 And underneath, the wroth sea-waves are white.
 The city soundeth, girt with dreadful glare.
 The cataract cloud spouts storm. With faintest
 light,
 Athwart the seething dark suspended fair,
 A wan moon-rainbow wavers on the height.
 A thing of darkness and of shapelessness,
 Half-bat, half-serpent, flitteth outward, there ;
 Much like the sadness struggling under stress
 Of a strong purpose vexed, not baffled, by despair.

X.

This is a mystery. And methinks 't were worth
 Much thought to know what things it would ex-
 press.
 Dürer, the drawer of dread things, drew forth
 The image of it, and the marvellousness,

Out of the angry labor of the North,
Whose child he was : to be (if I can guess
Aright) man's protest against death, and dust,
Sad time, sick sloth, and wretched-heartedness,
And shame, and miserable self-mistrust,
And wicked fears that do full oft men's souls distress.

LAST WORDS

OF A SENSITIVE SECOND-RATE POET.



WILL, are you sitting and watching there
 yet? And I know, by a certain skill
 That grows out of utter wakefulness, the
 night must be far spent, Will :
 For, lying awake so many a night, I have learned
 at last to catch
 From the crowing cock, and the clanging clock,
 and the sound of the beating watch,
 A misty sense of the measureless march of Time,
 as he passes here,
 Leaving my life behind him ; and I know that the
 dawn is near.
 But you have been watching three nights, Will,
 and you looked so wan to-night,
 I thought, as I saw you sitting there, in the sad
 monotonous light
 Of the moody night-lamp near you, that I could
 not choose but close
 My lids as fast, and lie as still, as though I lay in
 a doze :
 For, I thought, " He will deem I am dreaming,
 and then he may steal away,
 And sleep a little : and this will be well." And
 truly, I dreamed, as I lay
 Wide awake, but all as quiet, as though, the last
 office done,
 They had streaked me out for the grave, Will, to
 which they will bear me anon.

Dreamed ; for old things and places came dancing
about my brain,
Like ghosts that dance in an empty house : and
my thoughts went slipping again
By green back-ways forgotten to a stiller circle of
time,
Where violets, faded forever, seemed blowing as
once in their prime :
And I fancied that you and I, Will, were boys
again as of old,
At dawn on the hill-top together, at eve in the
field by the fold ;
Till the thought of this was growing too wildly
sweet to be borne,
And I oped mine eyes, and turned me round, and
there, in the light forlorn,
I find you sitting beside me. But the dawn is at
hand, I know.
Sleep a little. I shall not die to-night. You may
leave me. Go.
Eh ! is it time for the drink ? must you mix it ?
it does me no good.
But thanks, old friend, true friend ! I would live
for your sake, if I could.
Ay, there are some good things in life, that fall
not away with the rest.
And, of all best things upon earth, I hold that a
faithful friend is the best.
For woman, Will, is a thorny flower : it breaks,
and we bleed and smart :
The blossom falls at the fairest, and the thorn runs
into the heart.
And woman's love is a bitter fruit ; and, however
he bite it, or sip,

There's many a man has lived to curse the taste
 of that fruit on his lip.
 But never was any man yet, as I ween, be he who-
 soever he may,
 That has known what a true friend is, Will, and
 wished that knowledge away.
 You were proud of my promise, faithful despite
 of my fall,
 Sad when the world seemed over-sweet, sweet
 when the world turned gall :
 When I cloaked myself in the pride of praise from
 what God grieved to see,
 You saw through the glittering lie of it all, and
 silently mourned for me :
 When the world took back what the world had
 given, and scorn with praise changed place,
 I, from my sackcloth and ashes, looked up, and
 saw hope glow on your face :
 Therefore, fair weather be yours, Will, whether it
 shines or pours,
 And, if I can slip from out of my grave, my spirit
 will visit yours.

O woman-eyes that have smiled and smiled, O
 woman-lips that have kist
 The life-blood out of my heart, why thus forever
 do you persist,
 Pressing out of the dark all round, to bewilder
 my dying hours
 With your ghostly sorceries brewed from the
 breath of your poison-flowers ?
 Still, though the idol be broken, I see at their an-
 cient revels,
 The riven altar around, come dancing the self-same
 devils.

Lente currite, lente currite, noctis equi !

Linger a little, O Time, and let me be saved ere I
die !

How many a night 'neath her window have I
walked in the wind and rain,

Only to look at her shadow fleet over the lighted
pane !

Alas ! 't was the shadow that rested, 't was herself
that fled, you see,

And now I am dying, I know it : — dying, and
where is she ?

Dancing divinely, perchance, or, over her soft
harp-strings,

Using the past to give pathos to the little new
song that she sings.

Bitter ? I dare not be bitter in the few last hours
left to live.

Needing so much forgiveness, God grant me at
least to forgive.

There can be no space for the ghost of her face
down in the narrow room,

And the mole is blind, and the worm is mute, and
there must be rest in the tomb.

And just one failure more or less to a life that
seems to be

(Whilst I lie looking upon it, as a bird on the
broken tree

She hovers about, ere making wing for a land of
lovelier growth,

Brighter blossom, and purer air, somewhere far
off in the South)

Failure, crowning failure, failure from end to end,
Just one more or less, what matter, to the many
no grief can mend ?

Not to know vice is virtue, not fate, however men
 rave :
 And, next to this I hold that man to be but a
 coward and slave
 Who bears the plague-spot about him, and, know-
 ing it, shrinks or fears
 To brand it out, though the burning knife should
 hiss in his heart's hot tears.
 But I have caught the contagion of a world that I
 never loved,
 Pleased myself with approval of those that I never
 approved,
 Paltered with pleasures that pleased not, and fame
 where no fame could be,
 And how shall I look, do you think, Will, when
 the angels are looking on me ?
 Yet oh ! the confident spirit once mine, to dare
 and to do !
 Take the world into my hand, and shape it, and
 make it anew :
 Gather all men in my purpose, men in their dark-
 ness and dearth,
 Men in their meanness and misery, made of the
 dust of the earth,
 Mould them afresh, and make out of them Man,
 with his spirit sublime,
 Man, the great heir of Eternity, dragging the con-
 quests of Time !
 Therefore I mingled among them, deeming the
 poet should hold
 All natures saved in his own, as the world in the
 ark was of old ;
 All natures saved in his own to be types of a nobler
 race,

When the old world passeth away, and the new
world taketh his place.

Triple fool in my folly ! purblind and impotent
worm,

Thinking to move the world, who could not my-
self stand firm !

Cheat of a worn-out trick, as one that on shipboard
roves

Wherever the wind may blow, still deeming the
continent moves.

Blowing the frothy bubble of life's brittle purpose
away ;

Child, ever chasing the morrow, who now cannot
ransom a day :

Still I called Fame to lead onward, forgetting she
follows behind

Those who know whither they walk through the
praise or dispraise of mankind.

Friend, lay your hand in my own, and swear to
me, when you have seen

My body borne out from the door, ere the grass on
my grave shall be green,

You will burn every book I have written. And
so perish, one and all,

Each trace of the struggle that failed with the life
that I cannot recall.

Dust and ashes, earth's dross, which the mattock
may give to the mole !

Something secure of achievement survives, as I
trust, with the soul.

Something ? . . . Ay, something comes back to me . . .

Think ! that I might have been . . . what ?

Almost, I fancy at times, what I meant to have
been, and am not.

Where was the fault ? Was it strength fell short ?
 And yet (I can speak of it now)
 How my spirit sung, like the resonant nerve of a
 warrior's battle bow
 When the shaft has leapt from the string, what
 time, her first bright banner unfurled,
 Song aimed her arrowy purpose in me sharp at the
 heart of the world !
 Was it the hand that faltered, unskilled ? or was
 it the eye that deceived ?
 However I reason it out, there remains a failure
 time has not retrieved.
 I said I would live in all lives that beat, and love
 in all loves that be :
 I would crown me lord of all passions, (and the pas-
 sions were lord of me !)
 I would compass every circle, I would enter at
 every door,
 In the starry spiral of science, and the labyrinth of
 lore.
 Arrogant error ! whereby I starved like the fool in
 the fable of old,
 Whom the gods destroyed by the gift he craved,
 turning all things to gold.
 A little knowledge will turn youth gray. And I
 stood, chill in the sun,
 Naming you each of the roses ; blest by the beauty
 of none.
 My song had an after-savor of the salt of many tears,
 Or it burned with a bitter foretaste of the end as it
 now appears :
 And the world, that had paused to listen awhile,
 because the first notes were gay,
 Passed on its way with a sneer in a smile : "Has
 he nothing fresher to say ?

This poet's mind was a weedy flower that presently comes to naught !”
For the world was not so sad but what my song was sadder, it thought.
Comfort me not. For if aught be worse than failure from over-stress
Of a life's prime purpose, it is to sit down content with a little success.
Talk not of genius baffled. Genius is master of man. Genius does what it must, and Talent does what it can.
Blot out my name, that the spirits of Shakespeare and Milton and Burns
Look not down on the praises of fools with a pity my soul yet spurns.
And yet, had I only the trick of an aptitude shrewd of its kind,
I should have lived longer, I think, more merry of heart and of mind.
Surely I knew (who better ?) the innermost secret of each
Bird, and beast, and flower. Failed I to give to them speech ?
All the pale spirits of storm, that sail down streams of the wind,
Through the cloven thunder-cloud, with wild hair blowing behind ;
All the soft seraphs that float in the light of the crimson eve,
When Hesper begins to glitter, and the heavy woodland to heave ;
All the white nymphs of the water that dwell 'mid the lilies alone ;
And the buskined maids for the love of whom the hoary oak-trees groan ;

They came to my call in the forest ; they crept to
 my feet from the river ;
 They softly looked out of the sky when I sung, and
 their wings beat with breathless endeavor
 The blocks of the broken thunder piling their
 stormy lattices,
 Over the moaning mountain walls, and over the
 sobbing seas.
 So many more reproachful faces around my bed !
 Voices moaning about me : “ Ah ! couldst thou
 not heed what we said ? ”
 Peace to the past ! it skills not now : these thoughts
 that vex it in vain
 Are but the dust of a broken purpose blowing about
 the brain
 Which presently will be tenantless, when the wan-
 ton worms carouse,
 And the mole builds over my bones his little win-
 dowless house.
 It is growing darker and stranger, Will, and cold-
 er, — dark and cold,
 Dark and cold ! Is the lamp gone out ? Give me
 thy hand to hold.
 No : 't is life's brief candle burning down. Tears ?
 tears, Will ! Why,
 This which we call dying is only ceasing to die.
 The hard thing was to live, Will. With flowers
 and music, life,
 Like a pagan sacrifice, leads us along to this dark
 High Priest with the knife.
 I have been too peevish at mere mischance. For
 whether we build it, friend,
 Of brick or jasper, life's large base dwindles into
 this point at the end,

A kind of nothing ! Who knows whether 't is fit-
test to weep or laugh
At those thin curtains the spider spins o'er each
dusty epitaph ?

Wherefore, if man be immortal (which faith in the
days that are done
I have ever upheld 'neath the weight of that Pres-
ent, which now is this Gone),
Should he fear lest his feeble unfolding from this
cramp and chrysalis world
Of forces sheathed in himself, by the strongest not
wholly unfurled,
This first of man's efforts at growth, howsoever it
fail or succeed,
Be the last of his dealings with time, and the spirit
stop short with the deed ?
Do you know, I have often thought, Will, that we
feverish spirits are, here
In life, shut down, like wingéd moths enclosed in a
crystal sphere,
Through whose thin glassy element we can see up-
on all sides round
The starry spaces, the heavens, the heights, the
depths, the immense, the profound ;
Which seen, the soul no sooner soars to attain what
her passion perceives,
Than bruised by her limits, with frustrate wing,
she falls to the earth. Death cleaves
With a kindly touch, as he passes by, this globe,
this brittle thing
That clips us round, and at last we are free. But
ah, woe, if the wounded wing
Of the broken spirit can bear no more the beating
heart above !

For me there will soon be scope to soar : but this
sorrowful weight of love
I shall hardly uplift from the earthy bed to which
it is sinking me.
Pray for my soul, in her trial, at hand, of the won-
derful world to be !
Pray for my soul, that she may find and fashion
some fairer way
From the manifold modes of expression as yet un-
found, unattempted, to say
The word within, which that handful of earth the
hard sexton will shovel anon
On the lips of a buried man can surely not check,
when its meaning is gone
To work on the world that death opens. I wait.
There are ages in store.
But the love . . . ah, the love, Will ! the fair hu-
man face that I followed of yore,
It eludes me at last, and forever ! forever I lose it !
the most
I can gain from the grave is — not this, but the
knowledge of why it was lost.

A BEATEN ARMY.

1.



WE have struck our last blow, we have
 spent our last shot now,
 And we pour here in protest the last
 drops of life.
 All — save man's honest right — we have lost, they
 have got now,
 And theirs is the triumph where ours was the
 strife.

2.

Ours, the blood on the bastion ; our foeman's, the
 flag there ;
 His, the soil of our birth ; ours, the graves he
 insults ;
 And our brave dead are dumb while their mur-
 derers brag there
 Of crimes praised on earth for successful results.

3.

Be it so ! though Right Trampled be counted for
 Wrong,
 And that pass for Right which is Evil Victo-
 rious,
 Here, where Virtue is feeble, and Villany strong,
 'T is a Cause, not the *fate* of a Cause, that is
 glorious.

4.

Here, where heroes are vanquisht, where robbers
are victors,
Where the Wronger the Judge is, — from Cæ-
sar to God
Scorned Justice, preceded no more by her lictors,
Appeals for escape from the axe and the rod.

5.

Be it so ! We are saved thus from man's obliga-
tions,
For man's mere success, to the means which de-
duct
From pure Truth just so much as is owed to rela-
tions
With Chance, for what Chance gives, — this
world's usufruct.

6.

Earth's Success, at the purest, with stain of the
earthy
Leaves the white worth of Truth, where it
touches it, less :
But what worth has Success in the cause that's
unworthy ?
We have failed ? Be it so ! We are pure of
Success.

7.

And so man puts upon us no claim, to diminish
Our claim upon God, — which is perfected thus :

Here our least gain begins where their greatest
must finish :

They — the debtors to Earth for what Heaven
owes to us !

8.

Graves are better than crowns thus. O, ever and
ever

This bartering Eternity's birthright to Time !
God, we give thee, unblemisht, our frustrate en-
deavor :

Earth, we leave thee, unchallenged, thy share in
man's crime !

A POOR MAN;

OR, THE MATCH-MAKER AND THE BIRD.

(BEING AN ALLEGORY.)



KNEW a man, the world called poor
 Because he barely paid the price
 Of leave to live. I passed his door,
 I think, once daily, twice or thrice.
 A little door in the long street,
 Left open to let in the sun
 Which, warmly its old friend to greet,
 Into the house did laughing run.
 For there was that in this man's face
 Which made you feel the sun was bound
 To come and shine on any place
 Where such a face was to be found.
 He barely earned the bread of life
 By making little wooden matches :
 He shaped them neatly with a knife
 And tied them up in tiny batches :
 The labor of his life was this.
 Perhaps, if I could feel quite sure
 Mine were as innocent as his,
 I should not mourn to be as poor.
 Because, whene'er I chanced to meet
 That man's face, I perceived it smiled
 A smile as innocent, and sweet,
 And simple, as a little child,

Smiling at all things. I suppose
His soul was in its infancy,
Life's smiling-time, which most men lose
By living. Else, I wonder why
I felt so sure he smiled thus too,
When neither I, nor any one,
Was there to see him. Think ! how few
There are that smile when quite alone !
And from a cage upon the wall
A bird sang to him all day long,
So sweet and merry a madrigal
That all who, passing, heard that song
Felt younger, therefore better ; just
As though the times were back again,
Which man's growth buries in the dust
It drops from its own branches, when
We yet could hear, from the blue sky,
In accents clearly understood,
Our Father saying to us, " Try,
My children, to be glad and good."
So I felt : so felt all that heard :
Till, pleased, the neighbors each began
To pray, " God bless the singing bird,
That sings to bless the workingman !"
For in the work of the man's hand,
As in the song of the bird's heart,
There was, we all could understand,
A unison. Each seemed a part
O' the other ; and still, both, as 't were,
Of something higher, — since both praised it.
The joy of labor, not the care ;
" The Poetry of Life," some phrased it.
The world (whatever that word means,
That means so little, or so much,

According as our humor leans)

Holds rich, or poor, whom good things, such

As fetch the world's good prize, belong

Or lack to. What 's the value which

God sets on Labor and on Song ?

This poor man had them. Was he rich ?

The old watch-maker (still his shop

Stands yonder, where the town buys watches)

Used daily, passing here, to stop

And greet my poor friend of the matches.

And, day by day, that rich man offered

To buy this poor man's bird away.

Ten gulden twelve fifteen he prof-
fered :

And still the poor man answered, Nay.

Ten gulden ? twelve ? fifteen ? a fortune

Undreamed of by a man so poor !

And still that rich man, to importune

This poor man, daily seeks his door :

And, day by day, the silver pieces

Before the poor man's eyes are spread ;

And, day by day, the sum increases,

And still the poor man shakes his head.

I watched this bargain, day by day.

We poets, in dark corners peeping

"For subjects," as you people say,

Have cat's eyes, that, when closed, and sleep-
ing,

As you might think, are most awake.

I, with this friendly fellow-creature,

Had bargains of my own to make ;

My business being with Human Nature ;

Whose ins and outs if we would turn to,

We men of verse must not be nice.

And I would have you people learn, too,
For what *we* learn we pay the price.
All these things happened, you may know,
In old Vienna, famed ('t is said there),
As now it is, in years ago,
For wooden matches which are made there.
Next time he came, the mechanican
Here, in his crafty hand, did bring
(The wary, wicked, old magician !)
An instrument, a marvellous thing !
And, quoth the wealthy man of watches,
" Good morrow, friend ! and, good friend, pray
How many dozen wooden matches
Do you suppose you make a day ? "
" Some twenty dozen. Sometimes more,
It may be." " Twenty dozen, say you ?
And, good friend, for each dozen score
How much may your employers pay you ? "
" For every dozen kreutzers five."
" The paltry fellows ! Only that ?
A beggarman, as I 'm alive,
Gets more by holding out his hat."
Therewith, triumphant, up he takes
A block of wood that 's lying by,
Sets to it his instrument, and makes
Some twenty hundred matches fly
All neatly shaved across the table.
" Magic ! why here, in half a second,
Are matches more than I am able
To make in twenty days well reckoned,"
The poor man shouts in wonderment.
" Just so, friend. Here your fortune see.
Keep you the cunning instrument,
And give the singing bird to me."

Amazed, subdued, bewildered, lost,
 The poor man rendered up the song,
 The labor, of his life. Almost
 I hoped that rich man, for the wrong
 He did this poor man, might be stricken
 In time by some avenging twinge;
 And something in me seemed to sicken,
 As when a sudden fallow tinge,
 For all the flaring of the sun,
 Shows the first sign of sure decay
 In Summer's glorious green begun.
 For when I heard my poor friend say,
 "'T is magic! devil-craft!" I thought
 He had good cause for saying this,
 And that the Devil might have bought
 God's gift away, — that smile of his.
 But now he flourished and grew rich,
 Gained money, spent it, throve in trade,
 Retired, and lived at ease. All which
 Was cause for smiling, — so folks said.
 And yet they say he smiled no more
 (And I believe the thing they say)
 That smile he used to smile of yore,
 When he was poor, and worked all day.
 How should he smile so? when the song,
 The labor, of his life were gone?
 Said I, just now, that all day long
 He used to smile, when quite alone?
 Error! Who less alone than he
 With work and song, then? It was *now*
 The man was *quite* alone, you see.
 And now he smiled no more, I know;
 Because this difference rests between
 Man's work — which Nature cheers meanwhile —

And the mere work of a machine ; —

One smiles, the other hath no smile.

So, still about my mind will lurk

The question There 's some value, sure,
God's Will assigns to Song and Work :

This rich man lacked them. Was he ~~poor~~ ?

A MAN OF SCIENCE,

OR THE BOTANIST'S GRAVE.



ere lie the mortal remains (I may spare
you the limitless list
Of academies, institutes, colleges, or-
ders, whereof he was member)
Of Doctor Theophilus Timothy Bloom, the
renowned botanist,
Deceased (so his gravestone instructs you) the
fourteenth day of December,

In the Year of Our Lord, One Thousand
Eight Hundred and Sixty-two.

See! the lichens, already revenging themselves
on their former tormentor,
Sprawl over his new-cut name, and have hidden it
half out of view.

Meanwhile, I that knew the man, mourning my
mild-eyed Mentor,

Graced in his dust by this epitaph lean and bald
as himself,

Whom I fancy I still see spreading his specimens
dry in the sun

He has taken his final farewell of, bequeathing, at
least, to my shelf

Full forty folios in print, and a manuscript newly
begun

On the carbonaceous compounds found in botanical tissues, —

Cellulose, glucose, lignine, dextrine, inuline, starch, —

A treatise laboriously written, and raising remarkable issues

On all questions of cellular structure, commenced but a year back in March, —

For the honor and glory of Science, as well as my old friend's sake,

I, that knew him, I say, here relate you his life from beginning to end.

Hark! how the throstle is singing! and yonder bluebells in the brake,

How they nod on the noontide airs! . . . Peace be to the soul of my friend!

Man's life dwindles apace, while the world grows vaster and vaster,

And Nature, pleasing herself, smiles heedless of simple or sage.

Be it known, then, that Doctor Theophilus Timothy Bloom, our master,

Who has left us forlorn of his lights in the sixtieth year of his age,

He, too, (who could imagine it?) under that lean leathern hide of his

Once bore about the high-beating and bountiful heart of a boy,

A heart full of wonder and worship! Was passionate, too, in the pride of his

New-born belief in himself as a being capacious for joy.

Bright you may image the eye of him (long since
dull as a paste eye),
Bright with a brilliant hope in a July morning
sweet,
When the boy's blithe step through the college
cloister bounded hasty,
And, proud, at the door of the Teacher the pas-
sionate boy's heart beat.

"Speak, my Pupil!" "O Master, I burn with a
boundless impatience TO KNOW."

"For this must I praise thee, my Pupil. For
knowledge is joy to the creature
Created to know the Creator. Yet patience! since
knowledge is slow,
Being infinite. *What* wouldst thou know?" And
the boy, unabashed, answered, "Nature."

"Nature is vaster than knowledge. What wouldst
thou know *of* her, my son?"

"Not, O Master, the *act*, which I see, but the
thought, which I cannot discern:
I stand in the centre, gaze round me, see every-
where action alone,
And find nowhere the source of the thought
found in action wherever I turn."

Said the Teacher: "In order, my Pupil, to reach
to the source of the thought,

We must follow the act in succession. The
thought may be one, once for all,
All at once; but the action is many and diverse,
to unity brought
In the mind by slow aggregates growing alike
from the great and the small.

“There is but one vast universal dynamic, one mover, one might,
Variously operant under the various conditions it finds :

And we call that by turns electricity, friction, caloric, and light,

Which is none of these things, and yet all of them. Ask of the waves and the winds,

“Ask of the stars of the firmament, ask of the flowers of the field,

They will answer you, all of them, naming it each by a different name.

For the meaning of Nature is neither wholly concealed nor revealed,

But her mind is seen to be single in her acts that are nowhere the same.

“Each of these acts is a spy and informer upon her ; and any

Of the separate sciences, following these, may be followed by man :

For the goal of man’s mind is one, but the goings of men’s minds many,

And each, by his own way going, must get to the goal as he can.

“By the hundred ways that await you are waiting a hundred guides :

Yet you can but walk one way at a time, follow one guide, use

One chart, in despite of the ninety-nine others each comer decides

At the outset to take or renounce, as his choice may predominate. Choose !”

Heavy, then, hearing this, was the heart of the student, whose soul

But a moment before on her wing was uplifting
the world's light load,

And, "How can I choose me, O Master, the road,
since I see not the goal ?

Or how can I choose me the guide, since I see
not even the road ? "

The Master, smiling, answered, " Of the
works of Nature, those

Wherein her method of working is easiest found
of detection,

Are certain living bodies whose life can but feebly
oppose

The life-seeking, life-slaying process of scientific
dissection :

" These bodies are vegetal bodies : the dealing of
Science with these

Is the least of her difficult labors. Begin, then,
with Botany Stay !

Open the door before you, and turn to the right, if
you please.

You are in the Botanical Class, now. Stay here,
friend. I wish you good day."

So sitteth Theophilus perched on the brim of the
beaker of knowledge,

Poor fly ! sipping Nature ? no, Botany,
— merely one kind of ingredient

Of the complex Elixir he thirsts for : — the blue-
eyed hope of the College,

A maiden-minded student, humble of heart and
obedient.

But O, what a hopeless confusion doth Order at
first sight appear !

Unwearied Theophilus, sitting, and conning the
grammar of Nature,
Through the whole of the humming hot noon
with the cuckoo's note cleaving it clear,
Is it knowledge thou seekest ? Then patience,
and master, meanwhile, nomenclature.

So, like a drunken bee, you behold him, bewildered,
floundering,
Foot-deep, faint in the pollen ; or, now, climbing
filaments, high on
The polypetalous whorl ; now, wandering round
and around a ring
Rotate, campanulate, ventricose, valvate
O wheel of Ixion !

Day after day, and still darkness. At length a
light breaks on the labor.

For Linnæus, the Lecturer tells us, has classified
plants, single-handed.
“ Classification of plants ? ” All hail ! bid
the pipe and the tabor
Be joyful ! the chaos grows cosmic : at length
on firm ground we are landed !

No ! For this classification, the learned
Professor continues,

Is utterly wrong ; since it separates plants into
sexes, like men ;
Whereas plants are not plagued, like us humans,
in that way. So brace up your sinews,
Push on, and good by to Linnæus. The light's
out. All darkness again.

Not that, just yet, it much matters : no cause, at the least, for dejection.

Here's a new house, where the first thing is simply to stow away lumber ;
Make yourself room to look round you ; in time, after further reflection,
Doubtless you'll hit on some better arrangement ; and, once disencumber

The ground that you stand upon, presently things will drop into their places,

Each his appropriate corner find out, and most fitting relation :

So, till the Fates find a fitter one, let us, not making long faces,

But thankful enough to Linnæus, put up with his classification.

New light anon ! Hope of haven descried from a different shore, now !

Where Science, in France, clearer-sighted, escaped from all tangle and trammel, eyes
The whole of the vegetal world in neat groups, and has fixed evermore now

This fact, — that, though plants have no sexes, they nevertheless may have families.

Still, though, the infinite found in the finite dismays our endeavor.

To the unknown perforce we abandon this vast starry sphere (sad confession !)

As baffling our bounded embrace ; but it surely is hard when forever

The least grain of sand we approach, growing reachless, eludes our possession.

Worlds beyond worlds without end, we may make
up our minds to relinquish ;

But worlds within worlds without end make the
heart of a man faint within him ;

To be mocked by a mite ! and to feel that the
lamp of our life must extinguish

Its light, ere, exploring, we measure immensity
packed in a minim !

To be crusht by a crystal of salt ! to be foiled by
a film, or a flinder !

To be stopped like the merest, minutest of em-
mets, whose poor little progress

To the goal, where she drops underground, the
least hump of a molehill may hinder !

A fortress to find in each fungus ! in each lady
Fly-trap an ogress !

“ One group, but one, from the million learn first
to know something about, now,”

Says the Lecturer, leaving the pulpit, his brain
for a while pumped powerless,

“ I propose to begin with the most elementary
class, and give out now

As the theme of our next day’s discourse, the
class called Cryptogamic, or Flowerless.”

Deep, then, we plunge into Acrogens, Ætheogams,
Amphigams, still :

Hope to get on by degrees into Exogens, En-
dogens : meantime

Moons wax and wane ; summers fleet ; from the
Student, as patient he crams still

Dry leaves under tin lids, steals sighing the glad
and the green time.

Sad ! For I fancy at times, as the moist eye
waned ever meeker,

And the lank yellow locks by degrees fall scant
from the pure bald brow,

Much-trying Theophilus (still a sad-thoughted unsat-
isfied seeker)

Startled, perchance, by the cuckoo, or vexed by
green buds on the bough,

Lifting those wide wan looks, with an unslaked
grief in the gaze of them,

Into the high blue stillness of heaven, so still,
and so high !

Watching the white clouds rolled on the unreturn-
ing ways of them,

Murmuring among his books, with a deep de-
jected sigh,

“ Ah, but all this, after all, is not what I pined for !
Up there

The veiled Mystery sits on the solemn mountain
peak ;

The vast clouds form and change at her feet ; and
my heart's despair

Cries aloud where no answer is heard ; for this
Silence never will speak.

“ Yonder, up there, as of old, when he played on
my heart's harp-strings,

The wind, with a surly music, is moaning aloof
in the tree :

Yonder, up there, in the blue and the breezy mid-
sky swings

The lanneret hawk, as of old, when my heart
went higher than he.

“ Could one leap all at once to the end ! not
doomed, like a grub, to grope

About in the blinding earth, looking up never-
more from one’s load !

Well, never mind ! One is laying up knowledge,
at least, one must hope ;

And one cannot afford to leap over the knowl-
edge that lies in one’s road.”

Intermediate methods ! importance of every detail !

Say we, consoling ourselves ; and again pick up
heart to persist.

Ha, but cryptogams grow by the hundred, and
books by the bushel, — *men* fail !

Here the door opens. In steps the Botanical
Archivist,

Asking . . . whom else but Theophilus ? what
better man could you wish ?

To catalogue all the collection of dried plants
recently sent

From the Himalayan range by Commander Cor-
nelius Fish ;

And Theophilus cannot decline an appeal where
an honor is meant.

Friend ! when a man to one purpose the whole of
his will hath awarded,

He will justly be jealous of all other claims on
the time given to it :

He will lock up his life in a turret of tall triple
brass, dragon-guarded,

Hide himself close in a strong central thought,
and let nothing break through it :

Beauty peeps in at the casement, he savagely fastens the shutter :

Pleasure trips light at the threshold, he pushes the bolt in the door :

Fortune, red gold in her right hand, comes fearless with good news to utter,

He seals up his ears like Ulysses, and laughs at her, proud to be poor :

But one foe, the most unforeseen, the most dangerous, deadliest of all,

Sure, if it finds, to o'erthrow him, — the child of a word or a glance,

The tenant of emptiest nothing, — he cannot exclude, nor forestall,

Nor contend with, how wary soever ; and that foe is Innocent Chance.

Theophilus, most conscientious, most scrupulous scraper together

Of crumbs dropt from other men's trenchers, laboriously much annotating,

Sorting, reviewing, arranging, — assigning its true whence and whither

To this plant, and that plant, of each plant the family history stating,

In the haphazard, higgledy-piggledy ship-load of riches from Nature

Robbed by Commander Cornelius Fish, the illustrious sailor,

Lights, by ill luck, on a milk-white gnaphalium, foreign in feature, —

Petals more pointed and definite, sepals profuser and paler

Than those of its kindred in Europe, — in short,
a new specimen, clearly
Distinguished. Whereat, as in conscience com-
pelled, for mankind's information
The Doctor (alas ! now no longer mere student,
but straightened severely
Into sedate middle age) then and there, after
due consultation

Of all that botanical writers have said on gnapha-
lia in general,
Sits down, and indites a small treatise, this
specimen specially treating ; —
Its structure, morphology, system, and elements,
gaseous or mineral,
Thus, in respect of the race of gnaphalia, our
knowledge completing.

Which done now, . . . no sooner the Doctor's
small treatise, exciting sensation,
Is read by the learned, than straightway three
scandalized *savants*, dissenting
In toto, determined to deal with what calls for
severe reprobation,
Hurl at him and the public three passionate
pamphlets, objecting, commenting,

Suggesting, appealing, opposing, inveighing, re-
proaching, regretting ;
Whereunto, nothing daunted, he feels himself
bound to make answer minutely,
Disclosing, expounding, disputing, affirming, deny-
ing, upsetting,
Proving himself no mere tyro, attacking the
main points acutely.

Back to the charge, each opponent, tenacious re-
turning, with rage hacks

Hard at the Doctor, and fights every inch with
the heart of a Roman :

Not to be vanquished by numbers, the Doctor, as
valiant as Ajax,

Buckles the tighter his breastplate, and rushes
in wrath on the foeman.

Religion, meanwhile, and Theology fly to the
rescue of something,

No man precisely knows what, with emphatical
protest on all things.

O what a strepitant contest, to make a man envy
the dumb thing

Gifted by God with the grace to be silent, what-
ever men call things !

Ossas of argument piled upon Pelions of perfect
conviction !

Otium rogat . . . no help for it ! Caught now,
mid-seas, in Ægeo,

On we drive, hurled by Euroclydon . . . Heaven
send us help in affliction,

And save us from heretic knaves, *qui non recte*
loquuntur de Deo !

Deathless, the dismal discussion continues through
years gray and grayer.

Curst be the hand of Commander Cornelius
Fish ! that did gather

That mischievous milk-white mountain weed, better
left on its layer

Of snow, near the sunrise, safe hid in the high
Himalayan weather.

Wretchedest weed in creation ! sly hypocrite fashioned by Fate,

To bring the gray hairs of my friend full of grief to the grave where he lies now !

Who could surmise in thy face of white innocence heartfuls of hate

And contention ? No more upon thee, wicked weed, will I ever set eyes now !

For the learned defunct we lament here at last grew (and all for thy sake too !)

Nothing more than, himself, a mere human gnaphalium, sapless and withered ;

Till Death, for his own choice collection of dried things, was minded to take to

Himself such a notable specimen. Bloom, with the bloom off him, gathered

By Dis, gloomy gatherer ! catalogued, packed up, disposed of forever,

Lies (here you have him !) named, dated, and done with. Meanwhile the great question

He started, surviving the Doctor, who died of his latest endeavor,

Continues to puzzle our Pundits with cart-loads of precious suggestion.

Suppose, now, some man with one object in life, — to construct a steam-engine : —

First, say you, study dynamics ; then metals ; learn smelting and founding ;

Off with you, next, to the cog-wheel department ; cog-wheels ; you may then join

The cylinder-makers ; and so forth ; in this way the full circle rounding ;

VOL. II. 7

Meanwhile the man dies. Our friend here, — what
now is he doing, I wonder ?

Chasing a phantom gnaphalium, worlds beyond
worlds wanly straying ?

Or simply, with palms crossed at ease on his cool
narrow couch, lying under

This pothor, and laughing alone in his grave-
sleeve at what I am saying ?

Anyhow, here lie the mortal remains (with a limit-
less list too

Of academies, institutes, colleges, orders, where-
of he was member)

Of Doctor Theophilus Timothy Bloom the renowned
botanist, who

Died in the year Sixty-two, on the fourteenth
day of December.

Well! sitting here on the grave of my master,
while under the stone

The red worm is picking his brains, there's a
notion comes into my mind : —

(Was it the throstle that sung it, up there where
the blackthorn is blown ?

Or here, in the long grass, was it let fall by the
whispering wind ?

What, if the gray cricket chirruped it, chasing you
seed-ball enchanted ?

What, if the wild bee hummed it, ruffling the rich
guelder rose ?)

The world, perchance, after all, knows already
enough : what is wanted

Is, not to know more, but know how to *imagine*
the much that it knows.

A GREAT MAN.

1.



HAT man is great, and he alone,
Who serves a greatness not his own,
For neither praise nor pelf :
Content to know, and be unknown :
Whole in himself.

2.

Strong is that man, he only strong,
To whose well-ordered will belong,
For service and delight,
All powers that, in the face of Wrong,
Establish Right.

3.

And free he is, and only he,
Who, from his tyrant passions free,
By Fortune undismayed,
Hath power upon himself, to be
By himself obeyed.

4.

If such a man there be, where'er
Beneath the sun and moon he fare,
He cannot fare amiss.
Great Nature hath him in her care,
Her cause is his :

5.

Who holds by everlasting law
Which neither chance nor change can **flaw** :
Whose steadfast course is one
With whatsoever forces draw
The ages on :

6.

Who hath not bowed his honest head
To base Occasion : nor, in dread
Of Duty, shunned her eye :
Nor truckled to loud times : nor wed
His heart to a lie :

7.

Nor feared to follow, in the offence
Of false opinion, his own sense
Of justice unsubdued :
Nor shrunk from any consequence
Of doing good.

8.

He looks his Angel in the face
Without a blush : nor heeds disgrace,
Whom naught disgraceful done
Disgraces. Who knows nothing base
Fears nothing known.

9.

Not morselled out from day to day
In feverish wishes, nor the prey
Of hours that have no plan,
His life is whole, to give away
To God and man.

10.

For though he live aloof from ken,
The world's unwitnessed denizen,
 The love within him stirs
Abroad, and with the hearts of men
 His own confers :

11.

The judge upon the justice-seat ;
The brown-backed beggar in the street ;
 The spinner in the sun ;
The reapers reaping in the wheat ;
 The wan-cheeked nun

12.

In cloister cold ; the prisoner lean
In lightless den ; the robéd Queen ;
 Even the youth who waits,
Hiding the knife, to glide unseen
 Between the gates ; —

13.

He nothing human alien deems
Unto himself, nor disesteems
 Man's meanest claim upon him :
And, where he walks, the mere sunbeams
 Drop blessings on him ;

14.

Because they know him Nature's friend,
On whom she doth delight to tend
 With loving-kindness ever,
Helping and heartening to the end
 His high endeavor.

15.

Therefore, though mortal made, he can
 Work miracles. The uncommon man
 Leaves nothing commonplace.
 He *is* the marvellous. To span
 The abyss of space,

16.

The orb of time is his by faith,
 And his, whilst breathing human breath,
 To taste, before he dies,
 The deep eventual calm of death,
 Life's latest prize.

17.

If such a man there be, where'er
 Beneath the sun and moon he fare,
 He doth not fare alone.
 He goeth girt with cohorts, powers,
 The monarch of his manful hours,
 Whose mind's his throne.

18.

He owes no homage to the sun ;
 There's nothing he need seek or shun ;
 All things are his by right ;
 He is his own posterity ;
 His future in himself doth lie ;
 His soul's his light.

19.

Lord of a lofty life is he,
 Loftily living, though he be

Of lowly birth ; though poor,
He lacks not wealth ; nor high degree
In state obscure.

20.

The merely great are, all in all,
No more than what the merely small
Esteem them. Man's opinion
Neither conferred, nor can recall,
This man's dominion.

MABEL MAY.

1.



I WAS weary all through of the thousand
 and one
 Wants, wishes, and wretchedest sorts of
 strife
 Within, and without, which some call Life,
 Mabel May,
 When I climbed to the cloud on the mountain
 cone,
 And lay on the bare black rock, alone,
 In the watchful twilight vast and gray,
 Mabel May ;
 And yearned for the yet unarisen light,
 As a wretch yearns, sick of a woful night ; —
 To plunge, in a passionate gush of sight,
 And leap at one bound of a rapture bright,
 Into the burning heart of the sun,
 And be lost, — like a star, when the dark is done,
 O'erwhelmed in the fount of the full-poured day,
 Mabel May !

2.

And lo you ! all round me, all o'er me, he rose,
 The august godlike Glory pure,
 Which not even the eagle's eyes endure,
 Mabel May :
 He smote, like a trumpet, the slumbering snows
 To a burning blush, from their pale repose
 Wide awake ; and How shall I say,
 Mabel May ?

My very heart ached with the interminate
 Splendor for which it had lain in wait.
 Was it joy, was it pain, was it love, was it hate,
 That agony born of a bliss too great ?
 And I staggered blinded beneath the blows
 Of the bare-orbed Beauty, and sought for who knows
 What phantom hand to lead me away,
 Mabel May !

3.

So it ever hath been, so it ever shall be,
 Since man was made for the lot of man.
 'T is the curse of his course since his course be-
 gan,

Mabel May.

Our soul to feel, and our sight to see,
 Are afire and athirst. Then it comes ; and we
 Are made sport for the powers we brought into
 play,

Mabel May.

We desire ; we are strong ; we are proud of the
 pain ;
 Scale the summit ; and, breathless, behold — but
 in vain —

What we cannot endure. We are lost by our gain,
 And o'erwhelmed by the triumph whereto we at-
 tain ;

Enslaved by the force we ourselves have set free,
 And unmade by the might that we make. Who
 is he

That stands fast, and looks full in the face of his
 day,

Mabel May ?

4.

So I turned me anon by the downward track
 To the valley beneath ; never lifting again
 My looks left dim by the dazzling pain,
 Mabel May ;
 With above and behind me the mountain, black
 And broad, still holding the sun at his back ;
 And dejectedly followed my darkling way,
 Mabel May,
 With no care now what the chance might be
 Of the next thing I should be forced to see,
 When the dance of the colors that, dazzling me,
 Danced on before, should disperse and flee,
 And leave me asmart from the torturous hack
 Of the Sun-god's triumphing knife, alack !
 Like that poor Satyr, he stooped to flay,
 Mabel May.

5.

But how did it happen ? For suddenly there
 The vale was washed with a warm sweet wave
 Of luminous verdure, balmy and suave,
 Mabel May ;
 And a million mild wild odors were
 Afloat in the fresh moist morning air ;
 And the birds broke out in a rapturous lay,
 Mabel May ;
 While on each grass blade, in a silver bell,
 The bright dew trembled before it fell
 To the warbling pure, in the sweetbrier dell,
 Of that delicate harper, Ariel ;
 And even the rock, no longer bare,

Was robed in a roseate mantle rare ;
And the gaunt thorn-bushes were laughing gay,
Mabel May.

6.

Fools fly in the face of the bliss they believe
They were born for. If born for it, why not wait?
Can fate miss man, or man miss fate,

Mabel May ?

No ! we claim to acquire, unresigned to receive,
What chance, not choice, can alone achieve :
And then, when we fail, as is fit, we say

(Mabel May),

“ Better check desire than clasp despair ! ”

But what, when we say it, if unaware
The burning Beauty we could not bear,
Taking pity on our pained pride, as 't were,
Should pour itself over our path, and weave
Life's way with the light we have learned to leave,
Warming our souls with a reflex ray,

Mabel May ?

7.

O, 't is you are the cause of these thoughts, I try
To release in song, but shall never succeed ;
They lie too deep in my soul, indeed,

Mabel May !

For in you is the light of my life ; and I
And my life are yours, to be made thereby
Of what color you will. You are my day,

Mabel May !

But that light of you in this life of mine
Were a depth of glory too divine

For my sense to bear, if it did not shine
Softened, reflected, — fused, in fine,
With the common things of life, that lie
In that light, transmuted to melody,
Odor, and color, by its glad play,

Mabel May.


My wife, my life, my day, whose sway
Makes all things sweet with a sense of sun, —
Scent-breathing flowers, and birds' glad tone!
My one in all, and my all in one,
Now I hold you fast where my footsteps stray,
And find you most when you seem away,
Loving you more than my love can say,

Mabel May !

END OF BOOK IX.



EPILOGUE.

PEED thee well, noble soul, gallant
heart,
Who unscares goest forth to the
strife!

Speed thee well, wheresoever thou art,
In the ranks of the armies of life,
Who dost battle for Good to the death,
In that battle which never shall cease;
And whose truth, long as falsehood hath breath,
Will not parley with falsehood for peace!
Who aloud, though unheard, criest No,
When earth's clamorous Yes doth assent
To the evil that 's easy to do
In a world that 's with evil content.
Yet restrain the exuberant sense
Of the strength that is theirs who are strong
In the Right: which, however immense,
Is not yet more immense than the Wrong.
For the battle, O soldier, is not
To the strong, nor the race to the swift.
For much given though little be got,
Yet, O giver, be glad of thy gift.
Though it be but a weed or a shell,
That the labor of ages hath given
Unto desert or ocean, to tell
Of how deluge and earthquake have striven,

Nature doth not despond : nor do thou
 From man's feverish effort hope more
 Than the laboring ages allow
 Nature's infinite patience to store.
 Look behind thee, and scan what is lost ;
 And around thee, behold what doth rest.
 Lo, how little earth saves at the most
 Of the life of her bravest and best !
 Of what mighty endeavors begun
 What results insufficient remain,
 And of how many victories won
 Half the spoils have been taken again !
 For in scum this hot passion of life,
 Seething over, is spent ; and so loses
 The possession of that which the strife
 Of its turbulent impulse diffuses ;
 Until, self-defeated, it sinks
 Back again to a lowlier level,
 As, from bubbles that burst at the brinks,
 Fall the lees of each lingering evil.
 By evangel and angel from Heaven
 Unto Earth's many mourners below,
 Long of yore, the " Glad tidings " were given :
 But Earth's gladness, O where is it now ?
 Long of yore, on the mountain, the voice
 Of the merciful Master was heard
 To the mourners proclaiming, " Rejoice " :
 And, rejoicing, they welcomed his word :
 To the hand of the rich man, " Restore,"
 To the heart of the poor man, " Be fed,"
 And " Be healed," to the souls that were sore,
 And to all men, " Be brothers," it said.
 But, since Christ hath been nailed to the tree,
 Fruits unripe have our hands gathered of it :

Noisy worship of lip and of knee,
Niggard love, not of love, but of profit.
For the poor is opprest as of old ;
And of all men is no man the brother ;
And the Churches but gather their gold,
While the nations destroy one another ;
Only, all of these things are now done
In another than Cæsar's name ;
And all wrongs that are Christless go on
Unashamed of all Christian shame :
By the white man despised is the black ;
And the strong hath his heel on the weak ;
By the burden still galled is the back ;
And the goal is yet distant to seek ;
Though, to guide us, its shining is oft,
Like a fire on the midnight, discerned ;
When the hope of man's heart leaps aloft
From the chain that his anguish hath spurned :
As in Germany once : when a priest
Was changed into a man, for man's sake ;
And his word, as the dawn fills the East,
Filled the West, till a world was awake ;
In the letter a soul was created
By the breaking the seals of a book ;
And man's conscience in man reinstated,
All conscienceless sovereignties shook.
Shook indeed, but not shattered ! For straight-
way
When indignant and bold in the breach
Thought arose, and sped on through the gate-
way,
Whence she beckoned to all and to each,
They that loosed her lost heart : and, as onward
She explored her companionless track

To the goal of her destiny — sunward,
 They wrung hands, and shrieked to her, “Come
 back !”

So she passed from among them forever,
 And hath left them where, still in the dark,
 Blowing watch-fires spent, they shall never
 Blow the ashes thereof to a spark :
 Once in England : when Hampden’s high will,
 Eliot’s truth that was true to the death,
 Pym’s large speech, and the sword that hath
 still

“FREEDOM,” graven by Law, on its sheath,
 Won for England what woe to the day
 When England forgets to revere,
 Or unheedfully casts it away,
 Through Futurity helmless to steer !
 Once in France : when the storm of the sound
 Of the spirits of men rushing free
 Shook the shores of the nations around,
 As the roar of a jubilant sea ;
 And the heart of the feeble waxed strong,
 For his friends were as one flesh and blood
 In the casting away of time’s wrong
 And the gathering up of earth’s good ;
 But dull time goeth deafly since when
 Those rejoicings were mingled by time
 With the moans of the murders of men,
 And the cursings of carnage and crime ;
 All is silent and sullen again :
 And again the old cankering forms
 Reappear, as when after the rain
 From the earth reappear the earth-worms.
 O, the infinite effort that seems
 But in infinite failure to finish !

Man's belief in the good that he dreams
Must each fact, he awakes to, diminish ?
God forbid ! Whom thank thou for whatever
Of evil remains — understood
As *good* cause for continued endeavor
In the battle 'twixt Evil and Good.
Heed not what may be gained or be lost
In that battle. Whatever the odds,
Fight it out, never counting the cost ;
Man's the deed is, the consequence God's.
No man's labor for good is in vain,
Though he win, not the crown, but the cross.
Every wish for man's good is a gain :
Every doubt of man's gain is a loss.
Not the price that we bargain to pay,
But the price that she sets on herself,
Is the value of Truth. Who can weigh
What the weight of her worth is in pelf ?
To the soul, by whose lifelong endeavor
Age hath won from the losses of youth,
The mere loss of an untruth is ever
Good as great as the gain of a truth.
Men were fashioned to love and to know :
And in Knowledge and Love are the goals
Of man's course, though its speed may be slow :
In our patience possess we our souls.
To love and to know . . . winning love,
Winning knowledge, by labored degrees
From the doubts life compels us to prove,
And the wants we are forced to appease.
For man's privilege is to wring out
From the knowledge of evil the zest
That intensifies good ; and from doubt
The convictions time puts to the test.

Old Experience — the bourne and the grave
 Of the Sluggard's self-sepulchred mind —
 Is the stronghold whence issues the Brave
 To acquire new realms for mankind.
 For had man's ever-widening will
 No domain but Experience, his sons,
 Like his sires, would be savages still,
 Chewing acorns and worshipping stones.
 Deep in Nature's undrained Cornucopia
 Every good that man seeks he shall find :
 And to fools, only fools, is Utopia
 The abode of the hopes of mankind.
 For whate'er God hath made for man's good,
 He hath granted man means to attain :
 Say thou therefore, " I will," not " I would,"
 Undeterred by the coward's disdain.
 All unblest would our fate be, indeed,
 If yet all that can bless it were ended,
 And we had but to write and to read
 Of the deeds which the great buried men did !
 Did they plant ? what they planted we grow.
 Every grain shall be ground into bread.
 Every virtue that 's in us we owe
 To the unborn no less than the dead ;
 For, ere born yet, Posterity breathes
 In our being ; and shapes by its breath
 The incentives (worth more than the wreaths)
 Of the men that win wreaths after death.
 God be thanked that the dead have left still
 Good undone, for the living to do, —
 Still some aim for the heart and the will
 And the soul of a man to pursue !
 God be thanked for the ills that endure,
 With the glory that 's yet to be won

From the hurts we may hope yet to cure
By the deeds yet reserved to be done !
And thank God for the foes that remain,
If they hearten us, Friend, for the fight ;
And the mercy that grants to man's gain
Yet a new gain forever in sight !
Forth ! Rejoice in the Good that God gives
By the hand of beneficent Ill,
And be glad that he leaves to our lives
Means to make them heroical still.



ORVAL;
OR,
THE FOOL OF TIME.
A POEM.

(IN FIVE EPOCHS : DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL.)

“La prépondérance du cœur sur l'esprit, . . . unique
source, spontanée ou systématique, de l'harmonie humaine.”
AUGUSTE COMTE.



DEDICATION.



TO

COUNT ARTHUR DE GOBINEAU,

Minister of France at the Court of his Hellenic Majesty;
Member of the *Société Asiatique* of Paris; Author of
“*Esquisse sur l’Inégalité des Races*”; “*Traité des*
Écritures Cuneiformes”; and “*Religions et Philosophies en Perse,*” &c.



AMONG the most praiseworthy customs of antiquity was that which imposed upon the discoverers of any new source, or spring, the pious obligation to build upon the spot some altar, however rude or humble, in honor of the beneficent Presiding Power. I have long wished, my dear friend, to dedicate some such reverent tribute of grateful feeling to those new sources of instruction and enjoyment which your genial friendship and fertilizing intellect have opened to myself; but were I to defer the fulfilment of that wish till I have the means of accomplishing it in a manner more to my own satisfaction, and better deserving your

acceptance, I should wait too long. Receive, then, not for the worth of its materials, but the sincerity of those sentiments which have inspired its dedication, this very slight memorial of a solid and lasting esteem.

OWEN MEREDITH.





P R E F A C E .



THE following scenes (written many years ago) grew out of the strong and vivid impression made upon my mind by the perusal of a paper in a foreign Review,* containing the analysis of a Polish Poem, of which the author's name is unknown to me. I do not understand a word of the Polish language, I have never seen the Polish Poem, I am not even sure that it has ever been published, and, certainly, this imitation of it was not undertaken by me with any view to publication. I presume, however, that it may be properly included in a volume which, like the present, is entirely composed of imitations and paraphrases. Let the faults of it be ascribed to myself, but its merits, if it have any, to the Genius of the unknown source of those ideas which it attempts to follow out.

Beyond the foregoing statement this preface need hardly be extended. For, if the faintness or rapidity of the touches whereby the author of any work of art is content to indicate the meaning of it be regarded as a defect, it is undoubtedly one

* *Revue des Deux Mondes.*

which can neither be removed nor amended by explanations which are not contained in, or suggested by, the work itself. It must be obvious to all, that, when the scope of a subject is indefinitely larger than the limits within which the treatment of it is confined, very much must be left to the imagination. To stimulate, rather than to satisfy, the thought and fancy of others must be the chief object of a poet whose own fancies and thoughts are compelled to traverse lightly and nimbly a wide field of contemplation ; and, for the sufficient attainment of the purpose he has in view, he must, of necessity, trust rather to the sympathetic co-operation of his readers, than to the positive solidity of those airy paths along which they are invited to follow the flight of his ideas.

To all who may be willing to accompany my "Fool of Time" across the wildernesses, camps, and forests through which he is now waiting to lead them, I can only say, in the words which I have elsewhere borrowed from the experience of a personage thoroughly acquainted with the conditions of all such fantastic tracts of travel,

"Und wenn ein Irrlicht euch die Wege weisen soll,
So müsst ihr's so genau nicht nehmen." *

OWEN MEREDITH.

* "If Jack-a-lantern

Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
You ought not to be too exact with him."

Shelley's Translation.



FIRST EPOCH.



BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

SCENE I. — *Sunset. Mountain and Valley near the Castle of Orval, which is partly visible in the background. Mists forming over the landscape. Distant joy-bells, which cease as the scene opens. The Guardian Angel descends.*

GUARDIAN ANGEL.



FROM soul to soul hath war been waged,
From star to star, from sun to sun :
Nor e'er shall be the strife assuaged
That's hourly lost and hourly won.

ANCIENT OF DAYS, that here in light,
And there in darkness, dost array thee,
Thou madest day, thou madest night,
And both obey thee.

The sons of night thy servants are :
They work thy will, no less than we,
The sons of light, that with them war
Unwearied where no end can be.
But woe to man, if light in vain
He sees, and seeks the darkness rather !
From seed of evil, evil grain
That man shall gather.

Dreams fade, deeds fail, and days depart,
And all is changed in time and place.
Thrice blessed are the pure in heart;
For only they shall see God's face.
Man's life from cradle leads to tomb;
Man's love from Earth may lead to Heaven;
Be thankful, therefore, thou to whom
A heart was given.

Hold fast, O man, to whom God gives,
To keep thy heart still undefiled,
The holy human love that lives
In kiss of wife, and kiss of child,
Hold fast the gift! The hour, that now
To Heaven returns, to Heaven is bearing
A husband's sacramental vow,
Vowed in God's hearing.

The pure in heart God's face shall see.
They of the Blest are blessed most.
Man's heart, O Lord, lies bare to thee:
Shall this man, Lord, be saved, or lost?
Though o'er his soul be cast the net
That Satan weights with strong temptation,
He that hath yet a heart may yet
Escape damnation.

[*The Guardian Angel ascends.*]

EVIL SPIRITS (*rising with the mist*).

With the vapors arising from earth arise
Shadows of Falsehood, whose shapes are lies,
And enter where ye are waited!
Phantoms, and films, and illusions,
That mimic the light you loathe,

With deliriums, dreams, and confusions
The creature that calls you, clothe !
Choke the conscience, and cheat the eyes,
Strangle the spirit, but stifle its cries ;
For the fall of the fool is fated.
Love to lust, and courage to crime,
And sense to sin, for the fool of time,
Orval ! Orval !

Thou, first, loved beauty of youth's lost bloom,
The Departed of Yesterday, rise from the tomb,
And bewilder him that bewails thee.
Too soon to the darkness hurried,
Wan ghost, to the light re-arise,
And, haunting him, dead but unburied,
Reappear in a dream to his eyes.
In the dews of the night be thou bathed, and bound
With the blossoms that grow upon graves, and
crowned,
By the heart of the fool that hails thee,
With the stars of the night, till the grave-
worm's slime
Be as glow-worm lights to the fool of time,
Orval ! Orval !

Thou also, old picture of Paradise, well
In the cobwebbed lumber-chamber of Hell
Hast thou rested, rotted, and rusted :
Beëlzebub's masterpiece, painted
Long since, though thy canvas be old,
And the hues of it tarnisht and fainted,
Yet retoucht with our purple and gold,
Thou shalt brighten, and glitter, and glow, for him,
With the colors of Eden ere they waxed dim.

Come forth, and be furbisht and dusted !
 O Nature, mother of sins sublime,
 Fair be thy face to the fool of time,
 Orval ! Orval !

Last, thou, too, carrion bird of prey,
 Whose name upon earth is Ambition, away,
 Where the huntsman to hunt thee hastens !
 Stuffed with Hell's ashes and cinders,
 Famed Bird of Perdition, depart
 From thy perch on the Past. Nothing hinders
 Thy flight, though a scarecrow thou art.
 Spread thy wings in the ardors of morn, and bright
 As the sunrise, and swift as the wind, be thy flight,
 Till firmly thy talon fastens,
 Red with carnage, and crooked with crime,
 On the ruined heart of the fool of time.
 Orval ! Orval !

SCENE II. — *Twilight. On the road to the Castle. Bridal
 Guests and Kinsmen passing.*

COUNTRY KINSMAN.

I say, good men should choose good wives.

TOWN KINSMAN.

Good Cousin,
 Were I about to choose a lackey, now,
 I'd choose him, Coz, for his good looks : because
 There's nothing you can absolutely know
 About your lackey, but the looks of him,
 Until you've hired him. But, were I to choose
 A wife, I'd choose her for her fortune, Coz,

Because there's nothing else a man can know
About a maiden, till he has married her.
Our fair new Cousin

COUNTRY KINSMAN.

With brown woodland eyes,
Shy as a forest creature freshly caught—
Zounds, Cousin! if Orval's not the loveliest
spouse,
As she's the loveliest, the world has seen
Since Adam married Eve among the roses,
The Devil take him!

A PRIEST.

Son, I have known this lady,
Since when she was the sweetest child, whom now
I know the sweetest woman, in Christendom;
Nor ever in the simple saintliness
Of her most innocent soul have I known aught
To wish away.

COUNTRY KINSMAN.

I am glad to hear it, Father;
For patience is the strength of Saints; and much
I fear that Orval's bride may need that virtue.
Young is he yet; and youth in him was ever
More full of whims and wanderings than the wind.

OLD KINSMAN.

Ay, our old House should have an older Head:
And more than ever in this swaggering age,
Whose starts and turns make sound experience
seem

A stubborn ass. But this wild nephew of mine
 Is wilder than a young unhooded hawk,
 And crammed with crazy thoughts : the flattered
 fool
 Of the new-fangled time's pernicious prate,
 Which no sane man can sanction.

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Uncle, Uncle,
 You wrong my cousin Orval ! I and he
 Were schoolmates. What the boy was, I believe
 The man is yet. Rash, choleric, if you will,
 But not less proud of his old name is he
 Because more proud, justly more proud, dear Uncle,
 Of his own power to add new value to it :
 Nor yet unmanly vain of gifts the gods
 Give no man that is ignorant of their worth :
 To him all noble names are trumpet notes
 Sounding his spirit to arms ; and his full mind
 Is stored with every kind of generous fuel
 That's quick to kindle to whatever spark
 Time, as he passes, from his torch shakes out.

OLD KINSMAN.

Green wood ! green wood ! all smoke and splutter,
 boy.
 Who was that Priest.

COUNTRY KINSMAN.

His name is Father Adam.

TOWN KINSMAN.

Not the first man in the world ? Eh, Coz.

POOR KINSMAN.

Well, I,

For my part, say that I most cordially
 Applaud this marriage ; which not only links
 Two lordly lines in one, but also mends
 What in the solid substance of our House
 A somewhat too close contact with the Court
 Hath here and there rubbed shabby.

TOWN KINSMAN.

How he'll cringe

To the new Countess, with his lap-dog looks !
 Already is he hankering, look at him,
 After his platter.

COUNTRY KINSMAN.

For all that, he's right.

I scorn the Court. No king shall ever hang
 His key between two buttons on my back.
 I'll be no lackey, who was born a lord.
 And as for Orval, youth's a fault time mends.
 I like his generous wildness well enough.

OLD KINSMAN.

'Faith, all these greatly gifted youths begin
 By taking out a patent of their own
 For the creation of the world ; and end
 By selling it for something they find still
 Worth having in the world, just as it is,
 As soon as they grow wiser.

COUNTRY KINSMAN.

Certainly.

And good wives make good husbands

VOL. II.

9

TOWN KINSMAN.

Good books say,
And I say, Coz, a sweetheart's cream : a bride,
Butter : a wife . . . stale cheese. Yonder's
the gate.

OLD KINSMAN.

And the sun's down. Boy, lift the link this way.
Come, gentlemen ; we're not an hour too soon.

SCENE III. — *Twilight. Under the walls of the Castle.
A graveyard adjoining a garden. The Castle, lighted
in the background. Dance music from within.*

EVIL SPIRIT (*hovering low*).

I hear a sound, long silenced, heard
Long since ; when in this frozen breast
The burning wells of sense were stirred
By that wild music's wandering quest.
Long since, and so long since, alas,
I may no more remember when,
In dream, or wake, my dwelling was
Among the homes and hearts of men.
Long since I heard what now I hear ;
My lip was warm with love and wine :
Men's praise was murmured in my ear,
So fair a woman's form was mine.
But now the fiends that howl behind
Command my heartless, homeless ghost
Some earthly form more fair to find
Than was the earthly form she lost.

(Over the graves.)

Blue eyes of Beauty, closed and cold,
Though filmed by death, and stained with mould,
 Beneath the gravestone dreaming ;
Awake ! and yield to mine the hue
You give the graveyard, violet blue,
When gray March mornings, drenched with dew,
 Among the graves are gleaming.

Bright hair of Beauty, mixt with moss, —
Rich threads the red worm runs across,
 When to his work he passes ;
Float from the grave, and give to mine
The gay gold gleams you grant to shine
Through buttercups that glitter fine
 Between the graveyard grasses.

Red lips of Beauty, bloodless lips,
Whose lover cold, Corruption, slips
 Through coffin planks to kiss you ;
Yield what, to flush the graveyard rose
With reflex light, your redness throws
Up bramble stems. No bud that blows
 From these will miss you.

Ho ! Satin sark, on narrow bed
For a dead Queen's slumber spread,
 Slumbering chaste in charnel ;
Leave the limbs, though they be cold,
Of the corpse which thou dost fold,
Clothe me ! Thou, too, crown of gold,
 Deckt with grave-grown darnel !

(Over the flowers.)

Woe to thee, garden ! woe
 Be to thy warden ! Who
 Cometh to check me ?
 Pansy, and passion-flower,
 Pranking your lady's bower,
 Red rose, and lily, shower
 Rare blooms to deck me !

Red rose, and lily white,
 Mine must you be to-night.
 Fade ye, and fall ye !
 Wrenched be from root and stem
 Flower-gold, and flower-gem !
 Deck me my diadem,
 Each as I call ye !

Blighted this garden be,
 Blossom, and branch, and tree !
 Perish, or come to
 Bloom in my cheek and breast,
 Roses and lilies ! Rest
 Ruined and dispossessed,
 Garden, and home too !

SCENE IV. — *Night. Within the Castle. Private chamber with a balcony overlooking illuminated gardens. Folding-doors (closed) in the background communicating with the state apartments of the Castle. Orval and Veronica in the balcony.*

SONG *(with music, from the gardens).*

The Spirit that shepherds and feeds
 The soft herds of the unseen Hours

(Among life's flowers, that are weeds,
And among love's weeds, that are flowers),
Wherever his light will leads,
As he wanders this world of ours,
Those flocks of his
Whose sweet food is
The fresh-fallen dew of the blossoming bliss
That is withered as soon as it flourishes : —

ORVAL.

Not yet!

VERONICA.

Then one kiss more, my own dear love,
My husband, . . . all best things in one best
word!

ORVAL.

O breathe not, breathe not, even . . . much
less, move,
Thou fair fulfilment of all dreams!

VERONICA.

My lord,
Guests in the garden . . . look! My ladies wait
To robe thy bride.

ORVAL.

'T will be no more the same
As it hath been, when we two pace in state,
I the staid spouse, and you the bashful dame.

VERONICA.

Dear despot!

ORVAL.

Sweet, I prithee, by the flame
Of this one moment's fire life's substance prove,
Then take the ashes Chance! I have lived, I love.
[*They embrace.*]

SONG (*from the gardens*).

He hath opened the pale penfold,
Gray Twilight had woven together,
Of the dim day's faded gold
And the eve's wan azure weather.
And the stars and sea-winds
Which that Spirit unbinds,
As they dance forth in light and in laughter,
Loosen, each from his lair
In the caverns of Care,
The passionate hopes that were pining there,
By Pride lockt fast, —
To follow at last,
Those dancers, dancing after.

VERONICA.

I must away!

ORVAL.

O, dreams less fair than this
Have died ere now, slain by their own strong bliss!
Wake me not yet!

VERONICA.

I hear my ladies call.

ORVAL.

No ! 't was the night-wind in those trembling trees
That tremble, being near thee ; or the fall
Of yonder fountain, sighing for far seas,
As I for thee some Naiad's madrigal !

VERONICA.

Flatterer !

ORVAL.

My love is great ; all language small.

SONG (*as before*).

Night is come forth from her hold :
And the forests and fields unfold,
Mutter, and sigh, and stir :
While, to wander away with her,
From their camps on the mountains cold,
Cedar, and pine, and fir
Are borne upon shadows bold,
Having husht, lest their way be told,
Bird, cricket, and grasshopper.
At her bosom she bears
The twin-born heirs
Of all that is brightest and all that is best,
In the gift of their mighty mother :
Whose faint lips, prest
To that mother's breast,
Are fed deep on the streams
Of the dim sweet dreams
That nourish each nursling brother :
But O, which is her fleetest and fairest son ?
For soft-winged Sleep is the name of the one,
And swift-winged Love is the other.

A WAITING-WOMAN (*entering*).

The bride's-ladies of Lady Orval attend
My lady in her chamber.

ORVAL.

Ah, the end !

WAITING-WOMAN.

The lords of Montmirail, and Fontlerey,
Conan, and Cornuant, and Vitikend,
Cuthbert, and Giles of Orm

ORVAL.

Enough! go say

That Lady Orval comes.

[*Exit Waiting-Woman.*]

VERONICA.

I must not stay.

Dear love, this noise and heat, how wearisome !
The tiresome dance, the tedious talk ! How
blest,

Dear love, 't will be in our own quiet home
To be alone together, and to rest.

ORVAL.

No, no ! A costlier fancy comes in place
Of that which must depart now to complete,
And crown Love's feast-day with a final grace,
For Love's feast-night to cherish. Go now, Sweet !
Bathe all that beauty in new beams. Prepare
Thy perfect splendor. Think what I must feel

When presently I stand aside, as 't were,
From my own bliss mix with the crowd
conceal,

So far as fancy can, from every thought
The knowledge of my sovereignty in thee ;
And see thee float before me sumptuously
In light, by thy full-beaming beauty wrought
(From love's bright never-failing source, thyself !)
Around thee like the languid splendor, blent
With balmy spices, when some radiant elf
Kindles all round him his rare element,
Upfloating to his native ether free,
While bursts the wizard's limbec as though
naught

Of thee were mine, but that which all may see ;
Till, spent with wishful wonder, back I sink,
Back on the dear delicious truth divine
That bids me live, with lavish leave to think,
And feel, and know, that all of thee is mine !
Mine, to make costly chaos and confusion
Of this well-ordered world ! mine, mine the right
To ruffle that calm hair's composed profusion,
And free that bosom from its bondage bright !

VERONICA.

O hush ! my poor heart dreads this dear delusion.
I shudder, gazing from that dizzy height
Where thy praise holds me into an abyss.
I, who am full of faults, and weak and slight,
With nothing but the love you 'll never miss
To keep me lovely in my dear love's sight.
When you shall find me nothing of all this
Your fancy feigns me now

ORVAL.

Quench fancy quite
In feeling thus, then . . . drowned in such a kiss !

VERONICA.

May God, beneath whose gaze my heart lies bare
As the unclouded summer, grant the prayer
I prayed when at his altar late I knelt,
This morn, and prayed, when on my cheek I felt
My mother's tears . . . that I may be to thee
All that his wife, my whole heart loves, should be !

ORVAL.

Go, robe thyself in glory ! Let my glance,
Borne on thy beauty down the bounding dance,
Glide, where thou glidest, as the passionate bee
Follows hot fragrance through midsummer air.

VERONICA.

My Orval ! Dost thou wish it ? would that we
Might glide away out of all noise and glare,
And be quite quiet . . . in each other hidden
Safe from all eyes ! But what by thee is bidden
Seems ever sweet to do.

ORVAL.

Veronica !

*[She breaks from him.]*SONG (*as before*).

Ere the moon is washt down by the wave in the
west,

(O thought dread and sweet !)
 Ere the nightingale, roused by the moon, is at rest,
 They shall meet !
 They, the twain who, of mortals, were taught by
 the Power
 That gave sweets to the bee, giving scent to the
 flower,
 To find in each other, what few find out,
 The one thing sweet in a world so sour,
 The one thing sure in a life of doubt.
 They shall meet, O where,
 They, the Strong and the Fair ?
 In what hour, not of time ? in what land, not of
 earth ?
 There where life is delight, and where being is birth :
 Where the soul and the sense are one feeling alone,
 As the heaven and the moonlight are two and yet
 one :
 Where the eyes from the lips
 Drink delicious eclipse,
 While, in rose-braided car,
 Love, free lord of his own,
 To the fair, the afar,
 The unseen, the unknown,
 Through faint depths of dim fire
 Is drawn, with tugged rein,
 By the steeds of Desire,
 In strong triumph amain,
 Through the twilit courts of the orient porch
 Of the Dawn of Life ; where the bashful train
 Of those tender, timorous Spirits, that are
 The bearers bright of his blushing torch,
 Are waiting the will of the Morning Star,
 To unfasten the gate which the Destinies bar

On the brave bold world, that is yet unborn,
 Of the resolute race that is yet to be,
 When the sunrise of Freedom, in Truth's fair morn,
 Shall be solemn and bright over land and sea,
 And all earth be one nation, whose name is borne,
 Trampling tyranny, scorning scorn,
 By the gentle, the just, and the free.

ORVAL (*alone*).

Ay! wherefore should it dawn not now, that day?

SONG (*as before*).

For the eyes of Hate shall be held so near
 To the looks of Love, that their light shall sear
 His baleful balls, and snaky Error
 Die, caught in the fangs of her own child, Terror.
 O dawn of the day we have waited long!
 O star of the summits we seek in song!
 Arise, and be bright
 On the bridal bower
 We have fashioned to-night
 For Beauty and Power;
 From whose embrace
 Bring the bright first-born
 Of the Promist Race,
 The mild monarchs of Morn,
 The strong lords of the Luminous Hour!

ORVAL.

Wherefore not now . . . not here? For some
 new world
 Majestic, populous with august shapes
 Of power, and light, and loveliness, begins

From out mine inmost being to put forth fast
Full pulses of a multitudinous life.
O ye innumerable teeming thoughts,
Forces, and faculties, and fantasies,
That rise within me, lords of lucid stars
Whose light makes midnight glorious, are ye not
The monarchs of To-morrow ? I have roamed,
Horsed on four-hoovéd Cheiron, reedy plains
Where river nymphs rose up to stare at us,
And Amazonian maidens aimed swift darts
That sung and missed us, as we fleeted past
Into old sleepy woods. I have twanged the strings
Of Orpheus' harp, and tasted berries brown,
Asclepios gathered out of gusty groves
By night for none but me. I have sailed far
With heroes in a hollow ship, through gulfs
And plunging seas, to Colchis ; and have seen
Black-eyed Medea boiling bitter herbs,
And pluckt the fleecy prize, and hasted home
Outspeeding Jason's ship. And, after all
These wonders, I awoke, I knew not where,
Tought by a woman's hand. And this stale world
Of common life looks new and strange to me,
Who find myself set suddenly, aware,
Awake, with eyes wide ope, a living man,
In the mid concourse of mankind . . . to cope,
Contend with, conquer, or be crusht by it ? No !
Already in my right hand glows and throbs
The golden ball of empire ! In my soul
Already stirs the instinct of command,
The godlike purpose, the preponderant will,
The proud resolve, and all that makes a man !
Farewell, you fair, fast-fading forms ! Farewell,
You ghostly nurses of the full-grown strength

That in these pulses pants, impatient now
 For action ! Let mankind take heed ! There comes,
 Uncalled, among the multitude of men,
 A stranger, native to an age not theirs ;
 Who means from out the mass of mortal deeds
 To carve a mighty monument for dreams
 That are immortal. Let mankind make way !

PHANTOM VOICES (*on the air, dispersedly*).

Whither, O whither, do we float to find thee ?

Thee, whom we chose and cherisht for our own !
 Dost thou not hear upon the dark behind thee

Familiar voices making fondest moan ?

Whilst thou wast ours,

Say, did we ever seek, false friend, to bind thee
 Faster than falling flowers

Which, for thy careless crown

Culled by our fond hands from forgotten bow-
 ers,

If lightest winds blew (could blown rose-leaves
 blind thee ?)

Dropped from thy loose locks, in soft-shaken
 showers,

Laughingly down ?

ORVAL.

Whence are those voices ? I have heard them once,
 When ? Where ? But now how changed their
 tone ! how faint !

Doth the wind sing them ? or doth fancy feign
 The fleeting echo of departed days ?

What are those forms that float before mine eyes,
 And seem to sink into yon drowning dark
 With desperate gestures, and wan visages ?

THE VOICES (*growing fainter*).

Faintly, ah faintly (effort unavailing !)

Strive we to reach thee ! Thou recedest ever.
Where doth the fault lie ? What hath been the
failing ?

Was it thine or ours ? ah, vain the dear endeavor,
Loved one, but lost !

And upon the midnight air we hush our wailing ;
Ghost, after withering ghost,
Wounded, with wings that shiver,
Shaked by the night-wind, a despairing host,
Lost as loosed blossoms on the bleak air sailing
Down from hurt boughs that, bitten by the frost,
Bloom again never !

ORVAL.

They fade. So best ! Lost friends, whose liquid
eyes,
That shine through swimming tears, from mine
recede

Like sad stars waning in the windy mist
Night sends to quench them . . . you, whose wo-
ful arms,

Yet waving, melt upon the midnight air,
Whose voices I no longer disentwine
From the night-swarming murmurs of the crowd
Beneath me . . . fare you well, without regret !
If from the world of dreams I am come down
To earth at last, it is because on earth
I find at last a world of dreams fulfilled
In one unblemisht life's beneficence
Of love for me. God, if my full soul falter,
Faithless to faith so fair, my soul disown !

GUARDIAN ANGEL (*passing above*).

Keep thy vow before God's altar,
And be my brother before God's throne.

A KINSMAN (*of the House of Orval, entering with
Father Adam*).

I told you we should 'light upon him here,
Lost in the admiration of himself.
Rouse, Orval! All thy kindred wait below.

FATHER ADAM.

Peace be upon this house, and thee, my son!

ORVAL.

Peace, Father? No! In passion there's no peace.
Painters and priests have given dove's wings to
Love.
They err, Love's wings have eagle plumes.

FATHER ADAM.

My son,
Those Loves with eagle plumes are birds of prey
Or birds of passage. Holy household love
Ranges no farther than the dove's wing bears
The dove's breast from her nested brood. All loves
That are not also duties, loves that build
No nest, are wanton wanderers, fed by chance
Or plunder; and the husbandman does well
To scare them off, or shoot them down. Young man,
There's more in holy marriage than mere love.
And that small consecrated golden hoop

Circling the finger of a wife, the vow
Breathed o'er it from a husband's heart converts
Into Eternity. Love takes it up,
And turns it to a sacred talisman
That opes to him the sacramental doors
Of that mysterious temple roofing all
The space between God's altar and man's tomb.

KINSMAN.

That 's what I say myself. Most certainly,
Love 's the least part of marriage. Look you now,
Dear Cousin, at this marriage of your own
Which all of us rejoice at, — I not least; —
Won from the wandering ways youth roams alone,
Fitly companioned, taking with you all
That should accompany life's traveller, trains
Of goodly baggage, troops of trusty friends,
You enter here life's broad main highway, bound
For where life's sober business must begin
In serious earnest. You begin it well,
With all the necessary furniture;
Lord, as by these wise nuptials now you are,
Of half a province, with a princely name.
Think what you may be, should be, must be.

Cousin,

The king is old and weak, and knows no more
Than a sick pauper in a hospital,
Plagued by a dozen vile diseases, each
Disputed by a dozen doctors, where
To turn, or whom to trust. Last year's new nos-
trums
Are all used up: last year's new minister
Totters already: and the hasty time

VOL. II.

10

Wears out great reputations fast as men
 Wear boots out on forced marches. You're the
 man,
 The very man that 's wanted

ORVAL.

 What! to smear
 My white hands with the soils of your bad work,
 That 's daily wearying hands, no longer clean,
 Of clumsy drudges, tasked in vain to keep
 This execrable heap of rotten rubbish,
 You call a system, just a little longer
 Than, if the wind blows, it seems likely now
 To hold together? I 'll not touch it, Cousin.
 I will not turn state tinker, — stop one hole,
 And make a dozen; by a pauper prince
 Paid from the plunder of a pauper people,
 And called fine names, for doing foolish work,
 By foolish folk. No, Father, you say well.
 There 's more in marriage than mere love: though
 love,
 If true to one, is true to all. But if
 I march forth to the battle-field of life
 Bearing love's banner, it shall be to fight,
 Not in the rear, but in the van, and win
 New realms for man.

KINSMAN.

 I 've but one word to say, then.
 'T is what a certain celebrated cook
 Said to his too enthusiastic pupil:
 " You push the pepper to fanaticism."
 But here comes Lady Orval.

FATHER ADAM.

Welcome, daughter !

BRIDE'S-LADIES (*entering with Lady Orval*).

Love us, Lord Orval, for the loveliness
We must restore to you ; our sweet tasks done.

ORVAL.

I do, dear ladies, and most lovingly
For your loved kindnesses I thank you all.
Commend me to the Graces, who, I see,
When Venus lost her godhead, wisely came
To live with you.

MASTER ANDREW (*entering*).

My lord, the hall is thronged
By liegemen to the Orvals, vassals, friends
And guests, inquiring for their noble host,
With voices whose impatient eagerness
I know not how to answer.

ORVAL.

We are ready.
Give me thy hand, dear love. Throw wide the
doors.
Thou tremblest, my Veronica ?

VERONICA.

Stay by me !
[*The doors are thrown open.*]

RETAINERS.

Long live the Bride and Bridegroom! Louder,
lads!
Long live our Lord and Lady!

ORVAL.

Thanks to all,
From us and ours. Fair welcome, worthy friends!
Joy's mouth is mute. Let music make amends.

ORVAL *and* VERONICA *pass down the hall saluting the guests.*
Music as the scene closes.

END OF THE FIRST EPOCH.

SECOND EPOCH.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

SCENE I. — *Night. Gothic Bedchamber. Bed with canopy, plumes, and heraldic ornaments, &c. A lamp burning dimly. In the bed Veronica asleep. Beside the bed, in a chair, Orval, also asleep.*

ORVAL (*speaking in his sleep*).



HENCE com'st thou? wherefore art
thou here again?

Thou whom, for many a wretched
night and day,

Lone as an orphan in a stepdame's house,

Sad as a Sadducee beside a tomb,

Memory hath mourned! What rests 'twixt thee
and me

Of aught resembling intercourse, less vain

Than fancy figures from a wind that sighs

Between two graves? Why dost thou haunt me
thus?

What can I more? art thou not satisfied?

Why are the dead not dead? who can undo

What time hath done? who can win back the wind?

Beckon lost music from a broken lute?

Renew the redness of a last year's rose?

Or dig the sunken sunset from the deep?

Why lingerest thou, with those heart-breaking eyes?

What can my love avail thee? Life is lost.

Why beckonest thou? How can I follow thee?

Dost thou not see Prometheus' fate is mine ?
The rock, the chain, the vulture at the heart !
Away !

(*Awaking.*) Where am I? Ah beside my
wife !

My *wife*? What is there in that little word
To make my flesh creep, and my conscience cry,
And wrap my life fast with infernal fire,
And change this pleasant earth into a hell ?
Veronica ! thou light of a lost star,
Thou heaven unhallowed, thou unhaloed saint,
Thou injured injury, thou sinless source
Of sin, thou faultlessness all full of faults,
Thou loss in gain, thou death in life ! What woe
That wants a name yet shall have thine to wear ?
Happy, thou sleepest, thou unhappy cause
Of sleeplessness. Sleep on ! dream on ! wake
never !

Would I had never slept, or never waked !
For I have slept too long, or waked too soon,
Who, dreaming, dreamed thee what thou
never wast,
And, waking, wake to what can never be !
I dreamed, and saw 't was nothing but a
dream !

I wake, and see 't is nothing like my dream !
Yet thou art fair, my lost Veronica :
Too fair thou art, too fair not to be wooed,
And fond as fair too fond not to be won :
Tender as evening air, true as a star ;
Pure as the dewdrop of an April dawn ;
Gentle, as creatures that were never wronged ;
Faithful, as creatures that no wrong can change,
Because their faith is like a dead friend's love,

Something that's ever what it was . . . But She?
 . . . O heavenly angels! Are these haunted eyes
 The dupes, or the deceivers, of my heart?

EVIL SPIRIT (*rises*).

Woe! woe! thou hast betrayed me and thyself!
 [*Evil Spirit sinks.*]

ORVAL (*starting up*).

Accurséd be the day, accurst the hour,
 Wherein I wedded! Curst the hour, the day,
 When I betrayed . . . madman, for what? for
 what?
 The glorious bride of my immortal soul!
 Whose beauty . . . Fool, to think Earth's fairest
 face
 Could outface Heaven's!

VERONICA (*waking*).

Home of my heart! my Orval! —
 Where is he? Am I alone? . . . Love, art thou
 there?
 Thank God! thank God! I dreamed of thee. My
 dream
 Was sad and strange. But thou art there, thank
 God!
 What ails thee, love? Arisen, and clad already?
 Thou shouldst have waked me sooner. Day? is
 it day?

ORVAL.

Day? no, child. Night. Black midnight. Sleep
 again!
 Turn thee upon thy pillow. Sleep! sleep fast!

VERONICA.

What ails thee, love? thy voice is strange : thine
 eyes
 Are wild

ORVAL.

Air, air! fresh air! An evil dream —
 A feverish fancy, — nothing. Heed me not.
 Sleep, child. *Thou canst.* Sleep on. I'll walk
 awhile.

Heaven's breath upon my brow, the sight of stars,
 The fresh cold rustling in the roofless fields
 Of the first birds, will help this aching head.
 Sleep fast, Veronica! The night is long.

[*He rushes out.*]

SCENE II. — *Night. A garden by a graveyard, as before.*

ORVAL (*walking with agitated gestures*).

O fool! fool! miserable, brainless beast!
 What devil was in thee when thou didst that deed?
 Who drugged the cup which thy besotted soul
 Sucked, as 't were nectar, to the deadly dregs?
 What bribed thee, brute, to be the murderer
 Of thine own liberty? this double chain
 Of never-changing custom, whose cramp links
 So glittered in thy gross and greedy gaze
 That thou didst take their gilded iron for gold,
 And sell thyself to clutch them! Break it now
 Thou canst not, though thou tear away the flesh
 They cling to, and canker. Out on this cheat, time,
 That wins eternity away from all
 Who trust the present's fraudulent promise pledged

Upon a bankrupt future ! What hath been
This life of mine, since that disastrous hour
Which made it mine no more ? . . . Death's leave
to rot
Down to the grave by gradual dull decays,
And moulder slowly !

[Clock strikes from the Castle tower.]

Ha ! is it not the hour
When I was wont to mount my throne ? My throne !
Where is it ? where my nimble ministers,
Those beautiful bright Spirits of burning orbs,
Whose congregated glories girt me round
With rows of starry brows intensely turned
To me, their monarch ; hands in homage raised,
Radiant, to reach my sceptre's point that, where
I waved, it swayed them, as the unseen wind
Around their ardent centre sways the tops
Of yearning flames : so yearned they all to me !
And my will ruled them all, like a young god.
Where are they vanisht from me ? What new lord
Sits on the throne my vassals built for me,
Waving my wand ? Minions, must I return
Like a repentant abdicated prince,
Yet hankering after power too rashly yielded,
To cry your pity, beg your leave to take
My crown again, and sue back your releast
And vagrant suffrage ? Rather shall I be
Like some lost god, whom loss of empire goads,
Clad in fierce grandeur of a fallen fiend,
And hungry for old incense gone, to prow
About the precincts of his perisht power,
With red eyes peering into empty bowls
Among his brazen shrines, and in the dark,
Where no more tapers burn, crouching to catch

And crush apostate priests. But no, by Heaven!
 My spirit, that long hath slept, awakes. Still
 mine
 Is all that made me what I was, — your lord!
 Bright slaves, behold me! Tremble! appear!
 obey!

[*He waves his arms wildly.*

(*After a pause.*) They come not. I hear nothing
 but the wind

Sighing among the graves; and nothing see
 But the wan clouds, whitening and darkening
 fast,

As through their melancholy membrane thin,
 Like a faint impulse through a sick man's veins,
 The flitting of the momentary moon
 Comes and is gone. Nature draws down the veil
 O'er her divine deep eyes, and like a stranger
 Hastes from me. *Vox clamantis in deserto!*
 I cry, and there is none to answer me,
 Call, and none comes. The Spirit that once plagued
 Saul

Plagues me; and unto me too, as to him,
 The voices of the oracles are dumb.
 God! Thou art just. Thy priests have conse-
 crated

The union of two human lives. But thou?
 Wilt thou vouchsafe no severance of the bond
 Which now unites two corpses?

[*Evil Spirit rises.*

Ah! she comes!

Bright One, again thy breath is on my brow!
 Again, again, those deep eyes in my soul
 On their own trembling image are shining sad
 As stars on a dark water! Calm and pale

Dictatress of my passionate destinies,
Beest thou but empty air, phantom or dream,
Or insubstantial vapor, the vext mind
Sends hovering up from the unquiet heat
Of its own burning thoughts, small care have I
To know aught else of thee than that *thou art* ;
And O how beautiful thou art to me !
Child of mine inmost self, that comest thus,
In the last watches of the wakeful night,
To tempt the father that begat thee, . . . O stay !
If thus it be, and thou, indeed, no more,
Image of all beatifying beauty,
Than the poor painted creature of the cloud
And habitant of hollow nothingness ;
What then am I, from whose corporeal self
And palpable humanity, fair fiend,
Thou hast suckt out the nobler essences
To feed the light of those bewildering eyes ?
This is the dross and refuse of a man,
Not I, not anything ! So let me breathe
In that fine air thou breathest, . . . else I die !
Thou hast dislodged me from myself . . . I claim
Inhabitation of thine airy sphere.
All thine I am. Lead on. I follow thee.

EVIL SPIRIT.

I have heard. Remember thou,
Mortal, thine immortal vow !
Through the night air, dark and hollow,
Where I lead thee, follow ! follow !
Farther than the rocky ledge
Of the stretched land's sea-girt edge,
Farther than where heaven's clear cope

O'er the flat sea's end doth slope ;
 Higher than tree-top ever grew,
 Mountain reached, or wild bird flew ;
 Deeper than those depths of green
 By the drowning seaman seen ;
 There where sun hath never set,
 Never rose hath withered yet,
 Beauty never ceased to be
 Beautiful, nor freedom free ;
 There, where life is life forever,
 Love, the light it loses never ;
 Where, a bright immortal child,
 Joy is ever fresh and wild,
 Fed on flowers that never there
 Winter strips of blossoms bare.
 Wouldst thou woo me ? Hither to me !
 Night and day must thou pursue me.
 Come, my lover ! Darkness cover
 All the life whose light is over.
 To me ! Woo me ! Wouldst thou view me
 As I am, pursue, pursue me !

ORVAL.

Rest ! rest ! O, if thou be the exprest Desire
 Of all desires, the Thought of every thought,
 Why rest no longer than a fleeting thought,
 A vain desire ?

THE VOICE OF VERONICA (*from a window in the
 Castle*).

Dear heart, the night is chill.
 Thou wilt take cold. Come back, come back, my
 own !

Without thy presence I am full of fears
 In this drear dim old chamber, all alone.
 O haste, dear heart ! The morning breaks. Haste
 home !

ORVAL.

Anon ! anon !

[Evil Spirit sinks.]

VOICE ON THE AIR (*dying away*).

Weak mortal lover,
 Fare thee well ! The charm is over.
 Soon to meet, though now to part,
 Faithless soul, and feeble heart,
 Hers thou art not : mine thou art.

ORVAL.

Gone ! . . . Yet methought with promise of return.
 And then ? . . . Hers, — hers, whate'er She be !
 Farewell
 Home of my fathers, and thou native land ;
 Farewell old garden where my boyhood played ;
 Farewell friends, kindred, all . . . and farewell
 she,
 Formed for all these, only not formed for me !

VOICE FROM THE WINDOW ABOVE.

Orval !

ORVAL.

Anon ! anon !

THE VOICE.

Prithee come soon.
 I am not very strong just now, dear love,

Not since our little Muriel was born, —
Nor very well ; nor able to say why
These faint cold seizures frighten me so much.
But come, thou dearest !

ORVAL.

And my child ? . . . Gods ! gods !

[*He re-enters the house.*]

SCENE III. — *An Antechamber in the Castle. A Nurse and Doctor.*

DOCTOR.

The child is a fine one — perfectly healthy —
wants nothing but his natural nourishment. But
you must be careful about your mistress.

NURSE.

O my dear lady ! What is the matter with her,
Doctor ?

DOCTOR.

Nerves, only nerves. Nothing but nerves.

NURSE.

And what is nerves, Doctor ?

DOCTOR.

Nerves are . . . humph ! nerves are . . .
(*looking at his watch*). Bless my soul, how late it
is ! Be good enough to see that Lady Orval takes
the draught I have prescribed, every fourth hour.

And above all, no excitement! no excitement!
The child will do very well. Which is the way,
my good woman? Thank you. Remember, no
excitement. And the draught every four hours.

[*Exit.*]

NURSE.

O my dear lady! if I knew what ailed her.
Nerves?
Sweet soul, 't is the heart, I fear, that is breaking.

SCENE IV. — *Evening. A chamber in the Castle, lighted and richly furnished. High Gothic windows open. Through them a wild landscape is dimly visible. The night is sultry and cloudy, with partial moonlight, frequently obscured. At one end of the chamber Veronica is seated by her harp. Near her, an infant asleep in a cradle. At the other end Orval, leaning against a window, and apparently watching the night: his back turned to Veronica.*

VERONICA.

I have sent to Father Adam.

ORVAL.

Eh? . . . ah, true,

The Priest. Quite right.

VERONICA.

He will be here at noon

To-morrow.

ORVAL.

In truth? at noon — to-morrow.

VERONICA.

At noon.

That 's settled.

ORVAL.

Thanks.

VERONICA.

And all the Family,
Of course I mean both Families, attend.

ORVAL.

Good.

VERONICA.

Everything is now in readiness.
I have arranged it all myself.

ORVAL.

Thanks.

VERONICA.

All.

And made good Master Andrew jealous.

ORVAL.

No,

I am not jealous, child.

VERONICA.

Thou ? (ah, the old,
Old aching empty end of every effort !)
I have distributed the largesses :
The winter cloaks for the old women.

ORVAL.

Thanks.

VERONICA.

Such pretty hoods and ribbons for the young ones :
And food and drink and music for them all.

ORVAL.

Ay, food and drink.

VERONICA.

Dost thou approve ?

ORVAL.

Of course.

VERONICA.

Dear God be thanked ! This ceremony over,
Our little Muriel will be a Christian.
Sleep, sleep, my little one ! my pretty one !
How the child has been dreaming ! Only see,
The little coverlet is all tumbled. Sleep,
My little Muriel, my pretty chick !

ORVAL.

O, the heat here ! This house is stifling me.
There's thunder somewhere. I can feel it in me.
Would the storm only burst ! . . . Ouf ! I shall
choke.

VERONICA (*after watching in silence for some minutes
her husband, whose back is turned, draws the harp
to her, and sings*).

If my love but loved me, I,
What should I do ? I that love him !

VOL. II.

II

Rise and live ? or drop and die ?
 If I knew some way to prove him
 Mine at last, hap then what may, —
 Tone of voice, or glance of eye,
 Could they make my love my lover, —
 Should I even dare to try
 Such a power ? who now, to move him
 Trying all I can, no way
 To win him to me can discover,
 For all my trying night and day !

[With sudden vehemence.]

To-day, . . . to-morrow . . . yesterday . . . for-
 ever !

What have I done ? what have I done, sweet saints ?
 Orval ! I cannot bear it. Look on me !
 Dost thou not see that I am dying of it ?
 Not one word dost thou speak to me. Not one !
 Not even one kind look, one answering smile.
 Dost thou not even *see* what I am suffering ?
 All find me altered since . . . ah, love, all eyes
 Save thine are sad to see this withering change.
 Hath no one told thee, love, how pale I am,
 And thin, and weak, and wasted ?

ORVAL.

(Surely now

The hour approaches !) On the contrary,
 My love, I never saw you looking better.

VERONICA.

Alas ! I think you see me not at all.
 You do not see nor hear me. When I speak
 You turn away impatient. When *you* speak

'T is not to me. How have I wronged thee, Orval ?
Thou dost wrong *me* most deeply. Whose the
fault ?

This morning I confessed all sins of mine
With tears of sorrowfullest penitence
To Him that is more pitiful than thou.
For I have sinned to Him . . . often, to thee
Never ! At the confessional I set
Bare in God's sight each sore and bleeding nerve
Of this bruised heart ; and searched out all its
faults,

The secretest ones, — that seem scarce faults at all
At first, or only faults like those friends find
In a loved face ; who love it all the more
For just such blemishes as serve to break,
With here and there the quaint, familiar turn
Of some defective feature, outlines else
Too faultless, they aver, to crave and get
The lenient pity, love soon turns to praise.
Such faults are worst. Love laps them round so
well

With borrowed lovelinesses that beguile
Kind Custom to conceal them for his sake !
And she contrives to baffle our best search,
Hiding them from us in our best-known selves,
Till, fed on unsuspected tolerance, oft,
Like savage creatures, tame in infancy,
Which yet no kindness can for long redeem
From their original wildness, these praised faults,
As we and they grow older, turn themselves
To drear deformities, revealed at last
By those unflattering looking-glasses, eyes
That love's departure leaves wide open. Alas !
Many such faults I found : but none, God knows,

None against thee! in all my soul no thought
That should offend thee, Orval.

ORVAL.

You have not
Offended me.

VERONICA.

Heaven knows how I have loved thee!

ORVAL.

And 't is my duty also to love thee.

VERONICA.

O hush! not *that* not Duty
that drear word!

Harsh charity which the unwilling eye
And grudging heart dole out to orphan hopes.
Far better buried in the grave of love,
Than fed on such cold comfort. Rather say
Thou canst not love me, Orval. Truth is sad.
But truth is best. The bitter truth once faced,
Both will be freer from the fear of it.
And let the rest come on us as God wills!
I have heard say there is in all our bones
A humor Nature's kindly forethought keeps
Hid in them, with no seeming use at all,
Until you break them, when the fracture frees
This wholesome juice that helps her healing hand
To mend its mischief. May be, broken hearts
Have some such secret balm in readiness
To make the best of ruin. But do not, love,
Begin to hate me now, because you think

That you *must* love me, whom you cannot love.
Only the truth, love ! I shall bear it somehow.
Only the truth ! 't is doubt that tortures most.
The truth ! it could not even surprise me, love,
If I had counted on myself. But then,
I thought so little of myself at first,
So much of what was great and strong in you,
Which seemed to cover me and keep me safe.
I always knew myself unworthy thee,
And always feared that you must find this out,
But not so soon. All seems so sudden now.
I should have been prepared

ORVAL.

Veronica !

VERONICA.

Love, if you knew I recognized your right
To take back all the love I never claimed,
Nor ever quite called mine, you'd have no cause
To hate me thus.

ORVAL.

Veronica !

VERONICA.

Not me,
Not me, have pity upon ! But O my hus-
band,

[*Rushes to the cradle.*

This . . . innocent remnant of my wretched love,
That never wronged thee . . . Think ! it is
God's gift,

Not mine, not mine ! O father, look on it,
It is thine own ! it is thyself !

[*She kneels.*

ORVAL.

Tears ? prayers ?
Clasped hands ? and supplicating sobs ? Wife,
wife,
What have I said, what have I done, to bring
This vehement battery of most stormy speech
And fierce reproach upon me ? Prithee rise.

VERONICA.

Nay, not till, on the altar I build here
To patience, all the love I render back
With unreproachful tears, the duty too,
That cannot comfort me who claim it not,
Be dedicated to thy child, whose birth
Was the beginning of my burial. Orval,
Swear thou wilt love thy son !

ORVAL.

Him ? . . . and thee too !
I love ye both. Believe it.

[*He stoops to kiss her.*

EVIL SPIRIT (*rises*).

Hail, my lover
Our bridal hour is come. Away with me,
There, whence thy sighs have won me !

VERONICA (*flinging herself into his arms*).

Husband !

THE SPIRIT.

Haste !

[*The storm bursts outside.*]

VERONICA.

Orval ! that crash ! the thunder-bolt hath fallen
Upon our roof. The terrible lightning flash
Is in mine eyes !

ORVAL.

How fair thou art ! how fair,
Bright mystery ! ethereal sorceress !
Thine eyes are wells of wonder ! thy loose locks
Gold labyrinths wherein love wanders lost !
Ripe budding kisses, bright with crimson dew,
And bathed in breathing balm, are thy red lips !
And thy looks draw me, filled with music, forth
In response to them, as a minstrel's hand
Draws hidden tune out of a throbbing lute.

VERONICA.

Help ! help, my husband ! all the air is fire.
I burn ! I stifle ! Help !

ORVAL.

Once more, once more,
That voice, though I should die to hear it !

THE SPIRIT.

She

That would retain thee must, herself, depart,
With all things that decay. Her little life
Is but a dying taper's smoke. Her love

A leaf that falls before the gust of time,
 Confounded with a million like it, lost
 And trodden down into the common clay.
 Her beauty is the heritage of the worm ;
 Her youth the play and sparkle of a stream
 Which soon the winter of old age shall freeze.
 I am immortal.

VERONICA.

Orval, Orval ! Saints,
 Save us, save *him*, my husband ! The house
 burns.
 The choking smoke ! the scorching flame ! Speak,
 Orval,
 What seest thou yonder with those staring eyes
 Fixt on the fearful fiery glare ? Help ! help !

ORVAL.

Hush, woman ! hush ! Creature of clay, blaspheme
 not !
 Daughter of Eve, thou standest in the light
 Of that Divine Ideal, in whose image
 The Almighty One conceived thee, too. But thou,
 Even in thy mother's womb, woman, hast heard
 The whisper of the serpent, and thou art —
 That which thou art !

THE SPIRIT.

Come !

[*Veronica swoons.*]

ORVAL.

Farewell, clay ! I follow.

SCENE V. — *Early Dawn. High mountain landscape.*

ORVAL (*ascending*).

It spreads before me, opens out on me,
And round me, — all I have loved, and longed to
lose

The life of my life in, winning it! My heart
Leaps like a river-god's what time he hears,
Fluttering the cold reeds of his frozen banks,
The first, faint, solitary kingfisher :
And all at once his drowsy godhead awakes,
And he, no blind, frost-bitten brooklet now,
But Ocean's lusty child, shakes free his limbs
Of their cold chains, which frowning Tanaïs takes,
And hastes to find, in some bright island bay
Far off, the sportive sea-maid that he loves.

VOICE IN THE AIR.

Hither to me! hither to me!

ORVAL.

Still on,
Higher I mount, and higher : as a strong star,
Stopped by no cloud that clings to the world's edge
Where night's lees settle. Far behind me fades,
And far beneath me, the loathed life I leave.
Ha! miserable insects, misnamed men,
Wretchedest worms that never yet had wings
To save you from yourselves, that sting each other!
Swarm on, sting on! and, in the dust that breeds
ye,
Grovel, and grope, and crawl, and die content!
For once, your prey escapes you.

VOICE IN THE AIR.

Follow! follow!
Higher! still higher, follow!

ORVAL.

I follow. Lead!

SCENE VI. — *Noon. Within the Church. Veronica, priest, sponsors, nurse, and child. Guests, kinsmen, and retainers, &c. Organ music.*

A GUEST.

So hotly bidden, and so coldly thanked!
Strange, that Lord Orval comes not!

ANOTHER.

Strange, if he
Were *not* strange! Doubtless, he is all this while
Penning some page of an immortal poem,
Resolved that nothing but the end of the world,
Which some folks think at hand, shall interrupt him,
And break off his best strophe.

A THIRD.

Hush! Look yonder.
How woful white our hostess. . . .

THE FIRST.

Ay! she seems
In pain, poor lady. What a wretched face!

THE SECOND.

She has not spoken yet to any of us.

THE FIRST.

And what strange eyes !

THE THIRD.

Eyes ! do you call them eyes ?
They glow like pits of fire where nameless things,
That died unblest, are being burned away.

THE FIRST.

What finely carven features !

THE SECOND.

Yes, but carved
From some clear stuff, not like a woman's flesh,
And colored like half-faded white-rose leaves.
'T is all too thin, and wan, and wanting blood,
To take my taste. No fulness, and no flush !
A watery half-moon in a wintry sky
Looks less uncomfortably cold. And . . . well,
I never in the eyes of a sane woman
Saw such a strange unsatisfied regard.

A FOURTH.

Humph ! this begins to look less festival
Than funeral. Or, if a feast, a strange one,
Like Timon's last . . . a putting a good face

THE SECOND.

On a bad case.

THE FOURTH.

And I that (pity me!)
Declined a breakfast with an epicure
Just to please Orval!

THE FIRST.

Listen!

THE PRIEST.

Muriel, wilt thou
Receive the holy baptism of Christ?

SPONSORS.

I will.

FIRST GUEST.

Look! look! how those wild eyes wax wide,
And flash with formidable intensity!

THE SECOND.

She stretches out her arms toward the child.
What is she muttering? Mark her. She will speak.
But . . . Gracious heavens!

THE FOURTH.

Aha! did I not say it,
“There’s something here amiss”?

FIRST.

She staggers.

THIRD.

Marquis,
Your arm ! You are the nearest of us. Quick,
Or she will fall !

PRIEST.

Muriel, dost thou renounce
The devil and all his works ? dost thou renounce
The pomps and vanities of this wicked world,
And all the sinful lusts of the flesh ?

SPONSORS.

I do.

FOURTH GUEST.

'Faith, that 's a large concession !

FIRST.

Hush ! Those lips
Struggle . . . that white face twitches. What is
she saying ?

VERONICA.

Muriel, receive her blessing, who unblest
Hath given to thee, what unto her was given
To grieve for, got — the bitter gift of life !
For I, that did in sorrow bear thee, most
Do sorrow that thou must much sorrow bear.
Yet one thing is revealed, which comforts me :
Begot in Sorrow, shalt thou Song beget.
So shall thy father scorn thee not, as me
He scorns, — for songless sadness : and so God
Shall hear thy voice among the morning stars,

And in between the palms of Paradise,
 And where the singing of those Spirits sounds
 To whom God listens, — and forget thee not,
 As me He hath forgotten. Powers shall be
 About thee, cohorts through a perilous land,
 And cloud by day, and fire by night

Ha, fiends!

Can all the sworded Seraphs and sentinel Saints,
 That stand on guard by this baptismal font,
 Not keep those plucking fingers from their prey?
 Son, have the Black Ones got thee? Touch him
 not!

The sign is on his forehead. Know your lord.
 This is God's crowned Poet!

SPONSORS.

What wild words

Are these? and art thou mad, Veronica?
 Revere these solemn precincts, nor insult
 God's House, thyself, and us.

VERONICA.

They hold him not.

Wings hath he, like a dove's, to flee away
 And be at rest. God gave him those dove's wings.
 He is God's gracious bird, that sang to us
 A little while, before the morning light
 Was quenched in cloud. But he is fled away.
 God hides him safe.

PRIEST.

Lady, this violent speech
 Wastes all our minds in fearful wonder; frights

From her chaste cells, whose incensed masonry
Is dim with the pure breath of pious thoughts,
The solemn echo that inhabits here,
Unused to answer sinful cries ; plucks down
The heavenward wings of holy prayer ; and kills
The startled soul of sanctity.

Hell's power
Shall not prevail against this sign. Behold !
Satan, I charge thee by the Name I serve,
Come out of her ! Let every Christian soul
Pray for her peace. Woman . . . you do forego
The reverence owed yourself, to outrage thus
Our sacred office, and the temple of God.
Anathema Sathanas ! Vade retro !

RELATIONS (*muttering*).

Indecent ! . . . Scandalous ! . . . Intolerable !
She hath disgraced us all. . . . Where's Or-
val ? . . . Shame !
Drag her away ! . . . What devil hath got into
her ? . . .
Can no one shut those lips ? . . .

VERONICA.

Remember, Muriel !
Remember, or my curse be on thee, son !
For the black wings are buzzing after us.
If the black fingers catch thee by the hair,
I know where they will drag thee. Higher yet !
Fly higher yet ! Show them the crown God girt
About thy forehead. How I prayed for that !
And now it glitters clear . . . a crown of stars,
And every star with mystic music filled !

Show them thy crown, O Poet, and they will crouch,
 And so we shall escape them. Fly! fly! fly!
 Farewell, my dove. I cannot follow thee.
 Thou hast such nimble wings, thou bird of God.
 And Heaven is so far off. Ah, turn! they throng
 Faster and faster. Save me!

GUESTS.

Look to her!

O miserable lady!

[Veronica falls insensible.]

FIRST GUEST.

Come away!
 Something hath happened in the House of Orval
 Which never should have been.

FOURTH.

Ah, said I not,
 "Something is here amiss"?

SECOND.

In any case,
 Our presence, I conceive, will be less thanked
 Than our departure. After you, my lord.

FIRST.

Your Excellency first.

SECOND.

Nay, then, indeed,
 If you insist

THIRD.

Marquis !

FOURTH.

Ten thousand thanks.
Exquisite flavor. How do you call this snuff?

THIRD.

I had it from the old king : and he's a judge.
Well, friend, you may be, after all, in time
To eat your breakfast with your epicure.

FIRST.

Come, gentlemen. Unwilling, have we been,
As unwisht, witnesses of this sad scene.

SCENE VII. — *Cloud, crag, and precipice, above a stormy sea.*

ORVAL (*still ascending*).

Where is she ? Whither fled, on the wind
That whips me through this withered waste ?

Where am I ?

Have they a name for men to know them by,
These desert steeps, . . . Calpe, or Caucasus,
Atlas, or utmost Thule's mountain-tops
Marked on no mariner's chart ? One thing is
sure ;

That never, even in dream, I trod, before,
The dreadful pavement of this dizzy path
That winds I know not where : never beheld

The broken margent of that savage sea
That in his beached basin, far below,
Boils like Hell's caldron; nor yon livid peak
Peering and disappearing through those gaps
Of restless cloud, tormented by the wind.
How horribly the huge stone's solid bulk
Seems hovering in the gust above my head!
Fierce as Death's altar, wreathed for sacrifice
With snaky shapes that round it, gaping, twine.
And what are *they*? Troops of pale, ghostly priests,
Or but fantastic vapors, sweeping round
With hooded heads, and waving arms? whose
dance

About their dismal altar floats in time
To . . . what low humming sound of surly song
Comes from the abyss to cheer them? Am I, then,
The victim these are waiting? the one thing
Yet wanting to complete their ghastly rites?
I care not. I must on. Here is no rest.
Already have I crossed the groaning tract
Of thunder, that with dense blue drench blots all
The blighted plain out. Far beneath me, borne
About these fanged and crooked crags, I hear
Faint noises only, as ever and anon
Between black sullen shores of gulfy cloud
There runs, and breaks, and falls, a pallid sea
Of momentary fire. Still on! still on!
The few lean firs, and solitary pines,
That struggled, few and fewer, as on I passed,
To keep pace with me, all have fallen away.
I have outstript them, scarcely heeding how
They stopped aghast, dejected, gazing where
They dared not clamber. Nature's self cried,
"Halt!

I can no farther go !” Yet on went I,
And still must on, — still on, while aught is left
Above me where man’s foot may tread. Still on !

A VOICE IN THE AIR.

Follow !

ORVAL.

I follow.

THE VOICE.

Haste !

ORVAL.

Where art thou ?

THE VOICE.

Here.

ORVAL.

Ever beyond !

THE VOICE.

Hither to me !

ORVAL.

At last
Behold the summit ! Further pathway none
To foot of man, beyond the utmost edge
Of this sheer precipice, earth’s reached end vouch-
safes.
Here must I rest. Here where, save stormy winds,
None ever mounted. Leagues below me, wheels

The wild sea eagle in his highest flight.
Higher than Babel's builders ever built
I have attained.

VOICE IN THE AIR.

Hither to me !

ORVAL.

Where art thou ?

THE VOICE.

I wait thee, O my lover !

ORVAL.

But far off
Thou art already. And I cannot pass
Where pathway none can be. Nor from myself
Spin, spiderlike, a passage through the vast
And vacant air to reach thee. I have climbed
The sudden sidewall of the world. Beyond
Is nothing but the abyss.

ANOTHER VOICE (*nearer, and louder*).

Where are thy wings ?

ORVAL.

Already dost thou flout me, mocking fiend ?

THE SECOND VOICE.

Is not thy soul immortal, infinite,
As thy desire, which on a single thought
Can soar beyond the battlements of space,

And, swifter than the speed of shooting stars,
Traverse the empyrean ? Yet dost thou cling,
Fear's captive, to some few bare inches left
Of Earth's base dust ? What ! art thou Earth's at
last,

Poor cowering piece of most presumptuous clay,
That wouldst have only Heaven ? Advance ! ad-
vance !

Why dost thou shrink ? Stopped by a little stone,
Scared by a passing wind ! Ha, doth thy flesh
Shiver, thy bones ache, in the buffeting blast,
Great Spirit ? searcher of the unsearchable,
Climber of the inaccessible ! Dost fear ?
Dost falter ? thou, the undaunted !

ORVAL.

Insolent voice,
I falter not. Show but thyself. Appear
In any form however horrible !
Take substance, and confront me ! Leave thy
lair
In the loose element come forth
approach,
That I may crush thee ! Dare me to the endeav-
or,
And if I quail before thee, nevermore
May I behold the beauty I would embrace !
I fear thee not.

THE FIRST VOICE.

Lean on me. Take my hand,
And it shall guide thee.
[*The Phantom of the Voice appears beyond the precipice.*]

ORVAL.

Heaven and earth ! . . . Fast, fast,
The flowers from off those glorious tresses fall,
And turn themselves to venomous crawling things,
With bloated pouches, and thick-speckled skins,
And fangs that flicker on the clammy crag !

THE PHANTOM.

Haste, O my lover, haste ! I wait thee. Come !

ORVAL.

Great God ! . . . What hideous whirlwind shakes,
and rends
To rags, the shuddering splendor of that robe ?

THE PHANTOM.

Hither to me ! Why dost thou linger ? Come,
My wooer, my wild lover, my bright lord !

ORVAL.

The whirling sleet is white on her wet hair.
How bony grows the beauty of that breast !

THE PHANTOM.

Hast thou forgot thy vow ? Art thou not mine ?
Come, traitor ! Come !

ORVAL.

O horrible ! horrible !
The sudden lightning hath stabbed out her eyes.

VOICE (*wailing away*).

Blind ! blind forevermore ! Eternal dark !

VOICES OF EVIL SPIRITS (*in the whirlwind*).

Away now, thou ancient damnation !

Thy task is accomplisht. Farewell !

Return to thine old habitation,

And abide in the nethermost Hell.

Gone is the robe we gave thee,

Crumbled thy crown ;

Never a pray can save thee.

Drop, though it cannot lave thee,

Into Lethe ! Down, and drown !

And thou, dost thou shrink, the unshrinking ?

Descend ! Thou hast mounted in vain.

For each mariner shipwreckt, and sinking,

There is room in the infinite main.

Others, ere thou, have striven

And failed. Not first

Nor last art thou, to whom Heaven,

For the profit of Hell, hath given

The pride that in Hell is curst.

ORVAL.

My God, for this then am I lost — that I,
The earth-born, have unearthly beauty loved
Better than all earth gave me ? followed this,
Trusted in this, suffered for this ! for this,
Forsaking all, am I forsaken now
By that for which all else I have forsaken ?
Defrauded by I know not what false fiend
Whose form was like an angel's fashioned !

VOICES OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Stay!

This fool hath yet a word to say,
 Lest God hear him, still be near him !
 We are watching for our prey.
 The soul that hath wooed her is blind
 As the Hell that hath won our wan elf.
 The wonder was he of mankind,
 Who in wonderment worshipt himself;
 And still, though the idol he worshipt be
 Broken, unbrokenly worships he.
 Prate on ! we hear thee exulting,
 Add folly to folly, and sin
 To sin, proud fool, insulting
 The Heaven thou couldst not win.
 That Heaven lay near thee, and round thee.
 Thou hadst but to enter, and dwell
 Content in the Paradise found thee,
 And bartered by thee for Hell.

ORVAL.

For this, you unjust skies ? for this . . . Vain !
 vain !
 The last hour locks me round. The surcharged
 blast
 Spouts blinding storm. The wroth sea roars, and
 rises
 Higher and higher, as though the dead men's
 hearts
 Were heaving underneath it. Rock by rock,
 The ruined land sinks : and a fervid light,
 More dismal than all blackest blackness, burns
 The withering world's red shrivelled edges bare

Of aught save that strange horror which begins
Where all else ends. It rises still, that sea!
White fire, and whirling water, and hissing wind,
And crackling crag, in one red gulf of Hell
Confounded, and, confounding all things else!
Merciless and o'erwhelming elements,
Man never was your master! Unseen hands
Are hugging me. And on my shoulder hangs
The dragging fiend. Help! help, thou Heavenly
One!

EVIL SPIRITS.

Sons of the Father of lies,
Rejoice! we have played for, and won him.
He struggles, and groans, and cries:
But the weight of our falsehood is on him.
Round him and over him
Hover, and cover him,
Baffle, bewilder, and drag him down!
If he should break from the net we throw for him,
Still shall we know him again for our own.
Our mark he beareth,
Wherever he fareth:
We have bitten it deeper than flesh and bone:
Tears though he weep on it,
Tears shall but deepen it,
Tears that bewail what they cannot atone!
Time shall harden it,
Lest God pardon it.
When we return for him so shall we find
him.
Shatter the spell now! Unblind, unbind him,
Loosen, and launch him, and leave him alone!

ORVAL.

The strife is futile. My brain breaks. The
abyss
Lays out long hands upon me. Ah, at last
My soul sees clear. At last, and yet too late!
Omnipotent one, must it be ever thus,
And ever shall thy Foe triumphant be?

GUARDIAN ANGEL (*passing above*).

Peace, wild winds and stormy waters!
Peace, thou troubled soul, to thee!
Pride that snares, and Sin that slaughters,
Passion's frenzied sons and daughters,
Pass, and set this sinner free!

Holy dew, from Heaven alighted,
Ere in childhood Faith began,
Brighten Faith in manhood blighted!
Holy symbol, signed and slighted,
For the child's sake, save the man!

Turn thee to the ancient places!
Holy angels undefiled
Live in loving human faces.
Griefs are given to thee for graces,
And for guide a little child.

From the grave though Love impeach thee
For the loveless years of yore,
From the cradle Love shall reach thee
Pardoning hands to turn and teach thee.
Go in peace, and sin no more.

SCENE VIII. — *Gothic chamber in the Castle of Orval — same as in Scene IV.*

ORVAL (*entering hurriedly, followed by servants*).

Where is your mistress, I say ?

A SERVANT.

Lady Orval has been ill, my lord.

ORVAL.

Not in her chamber ! where is she ? Speak.

ANOTHER SERVANT.

Our Lady left the Castle yesterday.

ORVAL.

Left ? gone ? where ? 'sdeath, sirrah, why dost thou answer not ? Speak, you staring fool ! Are you all dumb ? Zounds ! do you know me ? Am I a man to be mocked by mine own valets ? Andrew ! Where is Andrew ?

SERVANTS (*whispering*).

Ay, Master Andrew, go forward. Tell him thou. We dare not.

ANDREW.

(I would I were a tinker's ass ! I had rather carry tin kettles than this news. O Lord, is it not the very day our poor Lady first came to the Castle ? I shall never get it off my heart. It lies there as heavy as lead.)

ORVAL.

Andrew!

ANDREW.

Ay, my lord.

ORVAL.

Come hither, Andrew.

ANDREW.

Ay, my lord.

ORVAL.

Nearer, Andrew.

ANDREW.

Ay, my lord. (It will choke me. It sticks like
a fish-bone in a man's gullet.)

ORVAL.

So, Andrew. Art thou too in the conspiracy?
Where is thy lady? Devils in hell! dost thou
hear me, fellow?

ANDREW.

No, my lord, ay, my lord.

ORVAL.

Where is she gone?

ANDREW.

Gone! Ay, my lord. Indeed, to be sure. And
't is there the pity of it, I say.

ORVAL.

Knave, thou shalt smart for this. Where is my wife ?

ANDREW.

Gone, my lord.

ORVAL.

Where ?

ANDREW.

Away, my lord.

ORVAL.

The witch catch thee ! Whither, sirrah ?

ANDREW.

To the Mad-House.

[*Exeunt servants hastily.*

ORVAL (*after a long pause*).

Veronica! Veronica! Eh? hark!
Was it her voice there? No Veronica!
Gone? gone? What said those men to me,
just now?

Impossible! O, she but hides herself.
I should have guessed that sooner. A child's
trick.

Poor girl, to punish me for my long absence.

Ah, but this lasts too long. Veronica!

Veronica! . . . Enough! enough! . . . Forgive!
Forget! . . . I do implore thee, love! . . . No
sound.

And surely I searched everywhere No trace !
 And those men's faces O no, no ! my God,
 That were too horrible !

Hilo ! hilo ! Without !
 Without ! No voice no footstep
 no reply !
 The house is empty.

 And the woman to whom
 I vowed a faithful heart, a life of love,
 And loving care Devil ! have I cast her, liv-
 ing,
 Into the dwelling of the damned ? It was
 So pure a thing, so innocent and glad !
 Perfectly fair and good, to me God gave her.
 What have I done with her ? Where is she now ?
 Ha ! ha ! Who laughed then ? was
 it I myself ?

Mad ? is it I, not she, that's mad ?
 Ah no,

I dare not hope that. It would be too just,
 Therefore too merciful. I can reason yet,
 And reasonably know myself a wretch.
 There is no blood upon these hands of mine.
 Why do they feel so like a murderer's ?
 Thou curséd hand ! thou hast killed the innocent.
 Quick, then, and kill the guilty !

[Draws his dagger.
 Out, thou sharp

Straightforward justicer !

[Sinking his hand.

 Nay ! even thou
 Wouldst be too lenient. There's no point o' the
 law

Thou dost administer can reach and strike
 The original culprit. Silly lancet, all
 Thy simple surgeoning cures nothing. Here
 There is an ulcer which thou canst not probe.
 The soul! the soul! I cannot kill the soul!
 Back to thy case!

[*He sheathes the dagger.*]

What am I, then? In Hell

What name shall devils invent for one more damned
 Already than Hell's devilishest? . . . And she?
 Where now is laid that saintly head? What cries
 Of horror and of infamy now shame
 Those modest ears? That brow so calm . . .
 that lip

So innocently smiling . . . changed, O Heaven!
 Changed . . . and by me . . . to what? Ah
 wretched wife,

Didst thou send forth, into the wilderness
 Where God himself was tempted, and where all
 Save he have perished, thy poor simple mind
 To seek me, and hast lost it thus?

A VOICE FROM BELOW.

Ha! ha!

Optime! Optime! O what a theme
 For a tremendous poem! What a rare
 Dramatic genius! Bravo!

ORVAL.

Ah, the voice
 Of Satan still! Peace, mocking fiend.

What, ho!

My horse! my pistols! ho!

To horse! to horse!

[*Rushes out.*]

SCENE IX. — *In the house of one of the Orval Family.
Young and Old Kinsmen.*

YOUNG KINSMAN.

I have been to the castle, but could learn no more than that Orval had returned, and left it suddenly. I am off to the camp this evening. Perhaps when you see him you will oblige me by mentioning to him the trifling service I have been so fortunate as to have had it in my power to render him. I make a point of neglecting no opportunity to help those who can help me. And I like to show respect for the Head of our House, and a due concern for the dignity of all its members.

OLD KINSMAN.

Humph! But really I have half forgotten what it was all about.

YOUNG KINSMAN.

You remember that shocking scene in the church the other day, — and all that has happened since? Well, one of those daily scribblers, — fellows who live in garrets, pelting princely names with onion peel, — contrived to get hold of the story, — wrote and printed it, after his own fashion, — not omitting our Cousin's name even, in one of his insolent pamphlets, and —

OLD KINSMAN.

All the world read it. — I remember. The publisher made a fortune by it. Go on.

YOUNG KINSMAN.

I found out the hole where this vermin burrowed.
And sent my valet to cudgel the rascal. The castigation was a sound one.

OLD KINSMAN.

Well?

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Whereupon my man . . . you will hardly believe it . . . sends me a challenge.

OLD KINSMAN.

Good heavens! You did not accept it?

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Of course not. How could I? I should have been delighted to have had the honor of running any gentleman through the body to oblige Orval. But a fellow with no name — except on a title-page — whose father nobody knows, and whose mother everybody might have known. — A poor devil who must have pawned his shirt, if he had one, for the loan of a sword to cross with mine . . .

OLD KINSMAN.

O certainly — quite impossible — a very presumptuous fellow. But what did you do?

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Put myself to infinite trouble — pray tell Orval — went to town for no other purpose — saw the

minister — and had my man lodged in jail the same evening, where he is safe for life. And what is more, I flatter myself that I have not only arranged this little private matter promptly and satisfactorily, but also that it has enabled me to become a public benefactor. For the rascal, when he was arrested, had already begun the publication of twelve volumes of periodical blasphemy and sedition, which he entitled a Dictionary of the Sciences (he is one of those confoundedly popular busybodies who profess to know everything, and who really know nobody), but which was in fact nothing less than a series of insidious and venomous attacks upon Religion and Aristocracy, Church and State, and everything else that is sacred. I feel that I have extinguished a volcano. And as for the publisher of that libel . . . Trust me, he will make no more fortunes out of the affairs of our Family. The man is ruined.

OLD KINSMAN.

O, that is your man, is it? I know him well — his books, I mean. A dangerous dog. For he writes wittily, and, it must be confessed, with extreme beauty of style. This sort of writers is the most dangerous of all. Wit and elegance should not be tolerated except in the well-born. Ministers make a huge mistake in dealing with the press. They prohibit coarse language, vulgar virulence, sheer downright stupid abuse; all of which are harmless enough. And they tolerate refinement, grace, wit, good taste; which are damnably dangerous. I look upon all these popular penmen as

so many tailors, whose sly purpose it is to cut out and put together the patchwork of society after the pattern of their own interests. They desire, of course, to stitch their frieze so fast to our velvet, that all may look one and the same piece: we, on the contrary, to prevent such ignoble contact. Yet you prohibit the use of blunt bodkin, and coarse packthread, that make no way at all through such a piece of work, which needs delicate handling. And you allow the sharp needle that flits fast, and the fine silk that goes through. A mistake. Wit is the only instrument nice enough to carry the social thread safely from top to bottom, and tack the frieze to the velvet so tight that the seam between them is invisible.

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Wit or no wit . . . if I were the State —

OLD KINSMAN.

The State would be even more in debt than it is. But what then?

YOUNG KINSMAN.

I would hang all writers, printers, and publishers.

OLD KINSMAN.

No use. The stream of time is troubled to the depth, and the mud must come to the surface somehow. We must try to improve the people by degrees; for, I doubt we cannot chain it up much longer, and the cur is by no means fit to go loose. *Fideliter dedicisse . . .*

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Improve the people! Well, I saw a peasant broken on the wheel yesterday for stabbing an abbot—a young man of one of our best families—who had kindly improved the condition of the brute's sister.

OLD KINSMAN.

Humph! You have acted very becomingly. And I will tell Orval if I see him. Anything more? It is time for my bath and chocolate.

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Thanks. I will not detain you.

OLD KINSMAN.

Detain *me*, young gentleman?

YOUNG KINSMAN.

Ten thousand pardons. I meant to say I kiss your hand, Uncle. So delighted you approve. If you will kindly tell Orval. Thanks. My coach is at the door. An infinite number of good days to you, Uncle!

SCENE X. — *Corridor in a Madhouse.*

WIFE OF THE MADHOUSE DOCTOR (*with a bunch of keys, followed by Orval*).

No, I think not, Sir. They tell me there is no hope of the lady's recovery. Poor thing! I am

grieved that my husband is not here. It would have given him the greatest satisfaction to have the honor of waiting on your worship. He could have explained to you, better than I, the nature of this malady. Interesting case. My husband, Sir, has been very successful in the treatment of this kind of insanity. He has given much study to the subject. Perhaps you have read his book upon the Brain? 'T is much admired. But the worst cases — cases like this, I fear, are quite incurable. Quite. This way, if you please, Sir. You won't mind the noise? There is no danger. 'T is only Howling Tom. A violent case, very. But we keep him chained. The lady, poor dear, is quiet enough. Pray, Sir, observe the view from that window. The finest in this part of the country. Indeed, we are very healthily situated. But the establishment is large, Sir. Large, dear me, and costs a deal to keep up. And so little encouragement! One year we accommodated no less than four hundred lunatics, and not a sixpence from Government. Some of them paupers, too. For the Parish obliges us to receive them. But that sort of patients seldom lives long. Which is the Lord's mercy. To be sure, one makes something, when the season is good, by the gardens and orchards. Our pears are especially successful. Some of our patients are vastly fond of gardening, Sir. And we occupy them that way. Only the milder sort, of course. Bless your heart, there's a young man here that is a smart hand at pruning wall-fruit. Yet for all that, he will swear you by St. Christopher that he is a king's bastard. But there's no harm in him. Pray, Sir, is it true that

the lady's husband ran away in the night with another gentleman's lady? Well, I dare say, if the lady had been married as long as I — and that's full thirty years; thirty years, Sir, come next Lady-day — she would not have taken it so mightily to heart. In truth, she looks but a child. This is a strange world. Is it not, Sir? The gallery to the right, if you please. We have been thin, very thin, this year. But perhaps we shall do better by and by. Let us all hope for the best. That's what I say, Sir. And the Lord be bountiful to them that deserve it. Now, Sir. This way.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XI. — *In the Madhouse. High vaulted Chamber, barely furnished. Window barred. On a low wooden sofa Veronica is lying. Orval, with the Doctor's wife, at the door.*

ORVAL.

Leave me alone with her!

DOCTOR'S WIFE.

I do not dare.

Sir, if my husband knew . . .

ORVAL.

Tush, woman! away!

Let none dare come 'twixt her and me. Stand back.

[*Pushes her out, and enters; shutting the door behind him.*]

VOICE FROM THE CELLS ABOVE.

You have chained up your God ! You have crucified
Christ Jesus !

VOICE FROM THE CELLS BELOW.

To the gallows, to the block,
With every old gray head that wears a crown !
Princes, and priests, and men with noble names,
And all that 's clad in purple, and wears soft raiment,
All they whose feet go delicately, all they
Whose lips are fed on dainty fare, — I doom.
The time is come to liberate mankind,
And by me only must the blow be struck.

VOICE FROM THE RIGHT.

Down on your knees, you dogs ! Down in the dust
Before your lord and master ! Lick my feet.
Grovel and fawn ! For, by the grace of God,
I only, I myself, and none but I,
Am your legitimate sovereign. Cringe, you curs !

VOICE FROM THE LEFT.

The red stars start and plunge. The skinny moon
Time hath forgot to feed with sallow fire,
And she is dead ; and on her puckered cheek
Blue plague-spots sprout. He hath arrived at last,
The long-haired comet with a hungry eye,
That, shark-like, swims about all drowning worlds.
The great and terrible Judgment Day is at hand.
Thou that art in the city, flee away !

Thou that art in the mountain, hide thyself!
 And woe be to the breasts that do give suck!
 Time is condemned : for he hath slain his sons.
 The secrets of all hearts shall soon be known.
 Thou sea, give up thy dead !

ORVAL.

Veronica !

Dost thou not know me ?

VERONICA.

Ay. Have I not sworn
 Fidelity to thee and love till death ?

ORVAL.

Give me thy hand, love. Let us fly this place.

VERONICA.

I cannot. All's so weary here. I think
 My heart hath got into my head. It feels
 So full and O, so heavy ! and I am weak ;
 I cannot bear the weight of it.

ORVAL.

One step,
 But one ! Lean on me. All's prepared. One
 step !
 The horses wait below. Lean on me, sweet.
 So I will bear thee.

VERONICA.

Nay, let me rest here.
 I am very weary, lord. I have gone far,

And suffered much. Thou seest how weak I am.
I will obey thee, lord. But I need time.
I am slow of effort, and change ever came
To me unkindly, and was hard to bear.
Be patient with me, lord. If I rest here
A little while, I think that presently
I shall grow worthy of thee.

ORVAL.

O my God!

VERONICA.

God? Yes. How I have prayed to God for this!
Three nights and days, unceasing . . . but they
seemed
Three lives and deaths of agony. Then, at last
God heard me.

ORVAL.

I am judged: and Hell begins.

VERONICA.

And sent a sudden Spirit to comfort me,
And take me out of trouble, and teach me words
That can make worlds — wonderful worlds! where-
in
'T is possible to enter and escape
From any kind of this world's wretchedness,
If one knows how. For he is full of eyes
And voices, and his breath is burning fire.
So that there came a change; and I began
To see those bright surprising things which God
Sees, unsurprised, forever. For, when first

Thou hadst left me, lord, and I was all alone,
 And knew that I must still be all alone
 Forevermore, — even though new things should
 come

To sit beside me, speaking with feigned tones,
 And trying all they can, for my sad sake,
 To look like old things, — then I prayed, “O God,
 Grant me,” I prayed, “since all
 things else are gone,

Never to come again, that he may come
 Who never came before, — the Spirit with eyes
 And voices — he, that on his lips hath song,
 And vision in his looks, — that I may see,
 Though I have lost it, what life *might* have been.
 Lest even in Heaven I should be ignorant.”

ORVAL.

For her sake, not for mine, have pity, O God!

VERONICA.

And this God granted to me. For my prayer
 Was strong. And on the third sad day, dear lord
 (Because, I think, God wisht me worthier thee),
 That Spirit came: and then the wondrous change:
 And I became a Poet.

ORVAL.

Veronica!

VERONICA.

Yes. Scorn me not. I am not what I was.
 Wilt thou not praise me, Master? Ha! feel here,
 How it beats in me, all this brave new world

That I am Queen of! how it shakes me
feel

So yearning to be freed! One word of mine,
One little word can loose, or lock it fast.
'T is as I will. Shall I not show it thee?
Wilt thou not see how beautiful it is?
Couldst thou have made it fairer, lord? Say no!
Breathe not too hard. Such things are slight.

Sometimes

A breath dissolves them, as a breath begets.
But be quite quiet, as it is good to be
When the long, loud, and heavy daylight leaves
Sore labor loosed, and the tired sense is soothed,
And ready to receive in thankful peace,
As best behooves, what comes: — first, a light wind,
So light, that all along a sleepy land,
Laden with summer, it can make no sound
Where it winds softly, as a harmless snake,
Unhoused by some wise Indian's charming pipe,
Through little hamlets husht, and old warm woods,
Solemn at sunset, till, to prove its power,
With laughter low it lifts the loose rose-leaves
And lays them on the grass where lovers sit
Lonely as thou and I; and then, a star
Silent and sudden, stol'n there, who knows how?
In heaven just where the waning amber flame
Of the faint west burns to a clear cold green.
So softly, and so silently, my world
Out of my heart grows, as a summer night
Grows out of heaven. Only be very still,
Only lean back with half-shut eyes, and lips
Half open, acquiescent as they are
Whose hearts are happy; and thou too wilt feel
Its presence, as a summer night is felt

Rather than seen. Is it not fair enough
For thee to dwell in, also? Master, say,
Thou wilt not leave me all alone again
'Those wretched days, and long unrestful nights?

ORVAL.

Never! nor night nor day. So help me Heaven!
Poor innocent fawn that by the heedless hand
That should have fed thee hast been stricken down!

VERONICA.

Nay, am I not thine equal? I know all.
Why should I fear thee? Sit upon the ground
Beside me, and look up, and listen. Thine eyes
Are bright; but not so starry bright as those
Of other creatures fair, and strong, and strange,
That nightly come — from far — to hear me sing,
Crouching at my cold feet: creatures born wild,
But tamed by songs that lure them from their
 lair
Where mountain springs are loosed, or lower
 down,
Moss-masoned haunts where hermit violets hide;
Or grottos gray, under dim ancient gulfs
Of drowsy seas, where water-gods grow old
And placid, propt on quiet coral beds,
Blush-colored by the sea-maids; or far, far
Beyond the sempiternal frosts, in caves
That glitter with witch fires to welcome home,
Ere the short northern night be spent, some wan
Sea-fairy, coming in her flying-coat
Of white swan-feathers. Others, with long hair
And lustrous serpent limbs, that love to lie

Low among yellow maize in a hot land,
 Long sallow summer noons ; and some that leave
 Their wandering camps on thunder-paven clouds,
 To listen . . . as thou listenest now. Nay, wait !

[*She sings.*

What shall the Spirits that serve me bring to thee ?

Wilt thou the light of the loadstar, lord ?

Or pluckt-out eyes of the Pleiads ? My King, to thee

Pharoah's chariot, and crown, and sword,

Shall they fetch from the deep ? Or fling to thee,

Robbing Orion, his burning band ?

They can dive, and soar, and run,

Serving me ever by sea and land :

Because my song is a mighty one.

What shall we bring to thee ?

What shall we sing to thee ?

Master, praise us, and prize our worth.

Listen ! we cling to thee

Singing, and sing to thee

Songs of sorrow, and songs of mirth :

Songs of the winds and waves,

Plagues, famines, and earthquakes, and wars :

Ditties of death and of birth :

Litanies learned from the graves :

Lullabies sung by the stars

To the dead that sleep under the earth.

ORVAL.

Misery ! misery !

VERONICA.

Embrace me, now !

My husband, I am happy at last.

VOICE FROM THE CELLS BELOW.

Behold,

The days of endurance are o'er !
 With mine own right hand have I slain
 Seven kings : and their crowns were of gold,
 And their robes were red with the stain
 Of a trampled people's gore.
 And a hundred Priests, as they sung
 High mass at the lighted altar,
 I caught by the throat, and hung
 Their heads in a hempen halter.
 But there resteth a too-many-more.

VOICE FROM THE CELLS TO THE LEFT.

Woe to ye ! woe ! for the sun
 Is about to be snufft out :
 And the spent stars, one by one,
 Shall sink, and leave never a spark :
 And the world shall wander about
 In the dark, like a day that is done,
 And lose its way in the dark.

ORVAL.

As mine is lost already ! Fitly sings
 The voice of some mad miserable wretch
 The unconscious dirge of all that's dying here
 In my life's utter failure !

VERONICA.

Sigh no more.

Why wilt thou sadden me ? Thine eyes are wet :
 Thy cheek is wan. Canst *thou*, too, grieve ? Smile,
 Orval !

I know a secret that shall comfort thee.
Thy son will be a Poet.

ORVAL.

What meanest thou ?

VERONICA.

The Priest, with holy water at the font,
Baptized him Muriel. But I, with tears
Poured from the wells of a most perfect woe,
Baptized him POET.

ORVAL.

God, my punishment
Is just. But it is more than I can bear.

VERONICA.

Art thou not satisfied, great Master ?

VOICE FROM THE CELLS ABOVE.

Father,
Forgive them, for they know not what they do.

VERONICA.

Hush ! Didst thou hear him ? Was there ever a man
So mad as that ?

ORVAL.

Merciful Heavens !

VERONICA.

In truth
That man is mad. He knows not what he says.

But stoop! Lean down thine ear close
 closer so,
For 't is a fearful thing.

Now, I must tell thee
How it will be, if ever God goes mad.
There's not a worm that crawls about this earth
But suddenly 't will cry out, "*I am God*"!
Mark this and, soon as it hath cried out
 thus,
Proclaiming its divinity, 't will die
Dismally, rot, and putrefy, and breed
From the foul dust of its dead wretchedness
Wretcheder reptiles still. The sun and moon,
And all the stars of heaven, that stand so fast,
Will stagger, feeling God's hand loosed, and fall
Upon each other, and all together, dasht
Into eternal darkness, disappear.
Then Jesus Christ, that loves us, will no more
Have power to save us: God himself, in whom
He trusted, as we trusted him, being lost.
In both hands will He lift up his great Cross,
And, as a woodman to the water drags
Wearily a felled tree, and casts it in,
And lets the torrent take and whirl it away
From where it grew, i' the old time, when birds
Came in from heaven to house among its leaves,
Safe from the dark,—and, safe from noontide
 heats,
The little children slept beneath its boughs,
From age to age, — so shall He cast that Cross
Into the torrent of departing time:
And there shall it be shattered, and men's lives
All littered with sad ruins of what it was.
Tell no man this.

ORVAL.

Return, Veronica,
Wilt thou not see thy child?

VERONICA.

He is not there.
He hath flown away. I know it. God gave him
wings.
He is gone to wander the wide universe,
The winds know where: but they will never tell,
For no man understands what the winds say.
He hath far to go. And when he comes again
He will have gazed on all things that God made
Glorious, and terrible, and beautiful;
And tokens of them shall he bring with him,
Lest men should doubt him. When he comes again,
Then wilt thou love him, Orval, for the sake
Of his bright spoils.

ORVAL.

Woman! My heart is broken.
Ah, God! that change?
Veronica! Thou ailest?

VERONICA.

Yes. They have hung up somewhere in my head
A burning lamp. And ever that lamp swings
Backwards and forwards. And it hurts me, lord.

ORVAL.

Veronica! for Heaven's sweet sake

VERONICA.

Woe! woe!

TO MURIEL THE POET! For his days
Are numbered. Woe to Muriel! woe! woe!
The Dark Ones have him.

ORVAL.

Holloa! Help! help! help!

DOCTOR'S WIFE (*entering with other women, and in great agitation*).

A blister! . . . Quick! . . . Fetch mustard to
the feet!

Run to the Apothecary! Bustle, wench!

A blister! . . . I must look to the lady here.

Ah, sir, 't is you have been the cause of this.

O dear! O dear! What *will* my husband say?

How could I help it, if he forced me out?

Quick, you there, to the storeroom!

VERONICA.

Fare thee well.

My husband!

DOCTOR'S WIFE.

Lord ha' mercy, what is this?

Are you the lady's husband after all?

I'm sure I beg your worship's pardon. Wench!

Dip me that sponge in vinegar. Make haste!

Well, this is wonderful!

ORVAL.

Love, do not die.

Pity me. Pardon me. Not die! not die!

If you but knew what ages of remorse
This moment's wretchedness contains ! how lost,
How utterly, miserably lost I am,
If I lose you, love ! I have sinned ! I have sinned !
I dare not die. There must be years of pain
Ere I can hope to win a grave near thine.

VERONICA.

Belovéd, I do well. I know at last
Thou lovest me. And I am dying. Thank God !

ORVAL.

Alas, that swollen throat, and reddening brow
Pity, dread Power ! lift up thy heavy hand !

DOCTOR'S WIFE.

Sir, she will burst a blood-vessel. Pray, sir,
Help me to cut this corset. She must choke.
A knife ! a knife, wench ! Anything that 's near !
What will my husband say to this ?

ORVAL.

No, no !

This spasm must pass. There I have cut it
 see !
Her breast is bare She breathes. Veronica !
She hears me not. For God's sake, Madam,
 speak !
Such things must happen often in such a place —
And you are used to them — you are not afraid
That she will die ? — Look at her — Tell me — surely
Nothing 's to fear ?

THE DOCTOR (*who has entered unobserved while Orval was speaking*).

No, sir. Nor yet to hope.
Sir, you may drop that dagger. There's no breath
Left in that bosom. Upon those lips no pain
Where the last life-blood trickles. She sleeps well.
Nothing will wake her now. Cover the corpse.

END OF THE SECOND EPOCH.

THIRD EPOCH.

FATHER AND SON.

SCENE I.—*Sunset. Interior of a Gothic Chapel. Monuments, arms, banners, &c. Through an open door and porch in the background are seen a garden and graveyard (as in preceding scenes). The rays of the setting sun, passing through a stained window, between the tombs, fall in prismatic colors on the face and figure of the child, Muriel, who is kneeling. Orval is standing beside his son.*

ORVAL.



RAY, Muriel, pray, my son, for the re-
pose
Of thy dead mother's soul.

MURIEL.

Mater Regina!

Ave Veronica! pro nobis ora!
Queen of the flowers and stars!

ORVAL.

That is no part,
Boy, of thy prayer. Thou hast changed the words
of it.
Think, child, again. Pray for thy mother's soul.
This is the day, and this the hour, she died,
Ten years ago. Pray for her soul's peace.

MURIEL.

Hail

Veronica ! Mater Regina, hail !
 Thou movest among the holy angels of God,
 As the moon moveth through the stars of heaven :
 And from their folded wings the angels pluck
 Pure purple plumes, and strew them at thy feet :
 And over these thou walkest, clad in mild
 And melancholy splendor, as the moon
 Walks o'er the purple wavelets of the sea.

ORVAL.

Boy, boy ! what is this talk ?

MURIEL.

The words pierce through me,
 And pass from out of me. I cannot help it.

ORVAL.

Rise, son. God listens not to prayers like thine.
 Alas ! thy mother thou hast never known.
 How, therefore, shouldst thou love her ?

MURIEL.

Deeply, Father.

I see my Mother often.

ORVAL (*starting*).

Where ?

MURIEL.

In dreams.

Dreams ? Everywhere I see her. Yesterday,
 For instance, when

ORVAL.

When Boy, what say'st thou ?

MURIEL.

How pale she is ! but O how beautiful !
Father,

ORVAL (*troubled*).

Doth she speak ever ?

MURIEL.

Ay, last night

ORVAL.

Last night ?

MURIEL.

Methought I saw her down the darkness floating,
Vested in white, wan as a star-beam veiled
In wandering mist. And ever as she flew
This song she sang, which in my soul still sounds.

ORVAL.

What sang she ?

MURIEL.

I can sing it. But the tune,
The music, and the magic of it all,
Are gone ! gone gone !

ORVAL.

The words, Muriel ? the words ?

MURIEL (*sings*).

From off the immemorial palms
 Whose murmur thrills, from dawn to even,
 The golden Paradisal calms
 With music only heard in Heaven,
 I strip the balmy branches down,
 To build a place of dreams and shadows,
 Where thou mayst sleep, more soft and deep,
 Than dews in leaves and grasses, grown
 To seed, in windless meadows.

I glide among the glorious throngs
 Of choral seraphs, weaning
 Away, for thee, from out their songs
 The music's midmost meaning.
 From wells of wonder, depths of dream,
 For thee, my child, I gather
 Sweet sounds, and sights, and dim delights;
 That thou mayst speak with power, and seem
 A prophet to thy father.

There, Father! There's no word I have forgotten.
 Only the tune was something otherwise.
 But all day long I hear so many, and then
 The echoes of them grow confused. For all
 Passes, so swift! so swift!

ORVAL.

Veronica,
 Merciless Pythoness, whose spirit, fed fierce
 From troubled Memory's sad prophetic springs,
 Still shrieks for sacrifice! Wilt thou destroy
 Even thine own child? Is not my cup of doom

Filled to the bitter brim ? Must my son pay
 Thy vengeance for his father's crime ? And I
 Dig out my heart to hold another grave ?
 Is thy revenge, wronged one, not sated yet ?
 Revenge ? What am I raving ? Is not she
 At rest, in Heaven ? These are the common cheats
 Of childhood's easily self-deceiving brain,
 Whose uncorrected custom is to clothe
 With mimic imagery our own crude troops
 Of bodily feelings, till they front the eye
 Garbed in a borrowed life, and seem to be
 The individual external shapes
 Of things not shaped within us.

MURIEL.

Now again,
 Father, I hear my mother's voice. Her form
 I see not.

ORVAL.

Where, child, dost thou hear the voice ?

MURIEL.

Yonder, among the graves and cypresses,
 Where the sun's light is fading fast.

ORVAL.

The voice !
 What is it saying ?

MURIEL.

Singing, Father. Listen !
[*Sings*.

Gifts I bring to thee, many in one,
 Spirit of Muriel, soul of my son !

Gifts from the Powers that dwell on the height;
 Gifts from the Powers that dwell in the deep :
 Magic of music and marvellous light ;
 Magic of marvellous dream and sleep !
 Much shall be taken ; but much is given ;
 When the shade is on earth, and the star is in heaven.
 From the depths of the love of a mother
 In thy soul have I poured, I am pouring,
 Such a light as shall last when all other
 Is perisht, and earth is deploring
 That her darkest night, ere his day be done,
 Should dwell in the eyes of her brightest son.
 And the name of the gifts that I give thee
 Is BEAUTY : that never is past.
 For if Beauty but love and not leave thee,
 Thy father shall love thee at last.
 And thine eyes shall be shut ; but thy spirit shall see :
 And I pass ; but I pass not away from thee.

Ah me ! I lose the rest.

ORVAL (*musingly*).

Is it possible
 That the last word upon a dying lip,
 The last thought of a parting soul, should be
 The thought and word of all eternity ?
 O horrible ! . . . if, after all, among
 The blessed souls in Heaven (for, surely, she
 Is with them) there be spirits who are . . . mad !

MURIEL.

My mother's voice grows faint. I lose it, Father,
 There, in the light that's going from the graves.

ORVAL.

Dreadful Corrector of man's pride ! hast thou
Predestined, then, the child of my last hopes
To a life of madness, — an untimely grave ?
Mercy ! O from thy feeble creature, doomed
To breast a bruising world, take not away
Thy guiding gift of Reason ! Architect
Of this inimitable monument
(Not built by hands, nor reparable here)
To the most sorrowful memory of a soul
That sleeps, I trust, in sempiternal peace,
Shatter not what thyself hast made so fair !
Behold how desolate am I ! who gaze
Around my life as, round a wasted land,
A watchman gazes, from a ruined tower :
An eminence above a solitude !
Pity my child, and pluck him from the clutch
Of those infernal persecutors all
That persecute me still. To me Thou hast given
Strength to support the burden and the strain
Of fierce, intolerable thought. But him ?
A single thought, intense as those that burn
Nightly and daily here, might scorch and snap
The slender thread of his most delicate life.
God ! God ! For ten long weary wastes of years,
Neither by day, nor yet by night, have I
Known rest. And men have envied me my lot !
And in the clumsy catalogue, this blind,
Ill-judging world compiles for ignorant Fame,
I have been numbered with the fortunate !
There is no human heart that knows what pains,
What torments from within and from without,
What fearful memories, what foreboded ills,

Thou hast imposed on mine. God, thou hast
spared

My reason, but to stone hast stricken my heart.
For I have gazed in the Gorgonian eyes
Of that most Beauteous Horror; and henceforth
The heart is ice, the imagination fire.
Father of Love, grant me to love my child!
Creator, spare thy creature!

Rise, boy. Sign
The cross, and come. Peace to thy mother's soul!

SCENE II. — *A public promenade. Persons of all classes passing. Orval in conversation with a Philosopher.*

PHILOSOPHER.

Trust me, my lord! I never am deceived.
When I speak positively, I have grounds
For what I say. And I repeat, — the time
Approaches, when we shall emancipate
Women and negroes.

ORVAL.

Ah, you think

PHILOSOPHER.

I know it.

The countenance of Humanity is about
To assume new features. All that we behold
Implies amelioration, the approach
Of a more perfect social epoch. Yes,
Society must regenerate itself
By the elimination of decrepit forms.

ORVAL.

You think so ?

PHILOSOPHER.

Surely, even as this old globe
We all inhabit, in its progress round
The central light

ORVAL.

See you that rotten tree
Yonder ?

PHILOSOPHER.

Where ?

ORVAL.

There.

PHILOSOPHER.

What ? with the green leaves budding
Upon the withered bark ?

ORVAL.

The same. How many
Years longer, should you say, that tree can stand ?

PHILOSOPHER.

How can I tell ? One two, perhaps.

ORVAL.

And yet,
Although the roots be rotten, the trunk touchwood,
Fit only for the fire, — young leaves are budding
Upon the withered branch. Do you mark it ?

ORVAL; OR,

PHILOSOPHER.

Well,
What does that signify?

ORVAL.

Nay, sir, I know not.
Save that the tree must fall, and be reduced
To powder, which the winds of heaven will soon
Sweep from the surface of the earth.

PHILOSOPHER.

What then?
My lord, you are wandering from the subject-matter.

ORVAL.

I? on the contrary. I was but seeking
An image of this age: an illustration
Of you, sir, and your theories.

PHILOSOPHER.

Well, I say . . .
[*They pass.*]

SCENE III. — *A lonely place among the mountains.*ORVAL (*in reflection*).

To ashes I have burned the wealth of time
Upon the greedy altar of full-crammed,
Unsatisfied Experience: that grim god
That hath a hundred hands to snatch and seize,
And in them all nothing to give. All kinds

Of knowledge and of passion I have cast
Into the ever-hungering fire of one
Intense necessity to *feel*. All doubts
I have interrogated, all desires dislodged
From sullen slumber in their savage lairs,
And hunted hotly to the death ; all hearts
I have ransacked : and in mine own I find
Only the grave's great nothingness. My will
Can wake in others every sentiment,
Every emotion ; but within myself
(Whose soul dwells dark in vast vacuity)
There is not either hope, or fear, or faith,
Or love. I walk through life, as through a des-
ert
Once thronged with cities, temples, palaces,
Places of sin and pleasure for proud kings,
Whose pride God punisht, pulling down their tow-
ers,
Making their places empty, and their land
A nameless solitude. I seem to see
(Since nothing breaks the boundless prospect
bare
All round my barren path) . . . to see far off,
Beforehand, and so, unsurprised, encounter
The coming of all possible events.
I have no fear, and no desire have I,
That's not already old, and quite worn out.
I know that blindness on my son must fall.
I know the irreparably rotten frame
And structure of this old society
Wherein I live, whereof I am a part,
Must fall to pieces. All these things I know,
And, knowing them, suffer — even as God rejoices —
In myself only, for myself alone !

GUARDIAN ANGEL (*passing in the air above*).

Love thy neighbor! love thy neighbor
 As thou lovest thyself! For others,
 Not thine own self only, labor,
 Live, and suffer. Help thy brothers:
 Heal the hurt: and bind the broken.
 So shall pain to thee be token
 Of the pardoning power of what
 Pain, for others borne, makes ever
 Most divine in man's endeavor
 To reach God.

ORVAL.

What voice was that?
 Unhappy child! Doomed, for a father's fault
 By a mad mother's wrongs, to darkened days. —
 An endless incompleteness! a half-life
 Made up of glorious failures! a flawed star
 Filled with a beauteous sadness of eclipse!
 Faint shadow of a fleeting angel, forced
 To follow through a rough and thorny world
 Feebly, the far, far off celestial flight
 Of that winged glory, whose bright parentage
 Its substanceless and scattered radiance owns
 Vainly, — earth's weary traveller still, and still
 Heaven's fugitive outcast! Most unhappy child!
 Most miserable father!

No escape
 From the revengeful furies! no surcease
 Of everlasting punishment! no rest
 Anywhere found!

What is yon mighty eagle
 That rises yonder from the black ravine

Above the monumental mountains, bright
With sudden sunlight on his splendid wings,
Like Glory from a tomb ?

THE EAGLE.

Hail, Orval ! Hail !

ORVAL.

He spreads his flight toward me. And the loud,
Harsh-sounding beat of his enormous vans
Is like the hiss and rush of iron shot
Heard through the smoke of battle.

THE EAGLE.

With the sword
Of thy forefathers, Orval, shalt thou all
Their ancient glory and power reconquer. . Hail !

ORVAL.

His circling flight a windy whirlpool makes
And wavering darkness on the dismal air
Above my head. Round and around he wheels
On iron wing. My dizzy brain, too, whirls
Round and around. Fast, faster ! on the wind
My hair is danced my pulse beats
faster ! faster !
His keen eye glitters on me, hard and cold,
As the sharp shining of an unsheathed glaive.
It pierces through my brow, and through my
brain,
It pierces Ha ! at last I compre-
hend !

THE EAGLE.

Be bold and cruel. Nothing fear,
 Nothing yield. To none give way.
 Crimsoned all be thy career
 With the blood of trampled prey.
 Strong of will, and hard of hand,
 Vanquish foes, and friends command :
 O'er men's lives thy purpose spread :
 Paven be thy path with power,
 Piece of perishable clay !
 Soon man's longest day is sped :
 Soon the living are the dead :
 Make immortal life's brief hour,
 Be a god : create, destroy,
 Subject all things to thy sway !
 Life is power, and power is joy,
 Though it be but for a day.
[The Eagle disappears into a cloud.]

ORVAL.

I thank thee well, bird of the boundless air,
 Lord of the summits, rider of the storm !
 Hail to thee from these heaven-insulting hills
 Whose bare and blasted pinnacles have been
 Sole witnesses of our wild colloquy !
 Whate'er thou art — true messenger, or false —
 Prophet or tempter — boding harbinger
 Of evil, or high augury of good,
 Hail to thee ! Glory's solitary herald !
 And, O thou mighty Genius of the Past,
 Hear my heart's invocation ! If from earth
 Thou beest, with the departed ages, gone
 Into the bosom of invisible God,

Yet come thou back ! come to my call ! return,
Inspire my soul with thy strong, solemn breath,
Prompt my heart, guide my dedicated hand,
And fashion into formidable deeds
The fiery thoughts that in me rise !

[Setting his foot on a worm.

Die, reptile !

Nature thy lost life lacks not. The eyed air
Sees not — earth hears not — and the winds of
heaven

Take hence no record of the fugitive pang
Of thy minute extinction. In the abyss
Of imminent confused calamity
Which I behold, beginning, at my feet,
To gape for men, thousands — like thee — shall
perish,

Leaving behind them neither name, nor fame,
Nor glory, nor regret. Not one of those
Reckless innumerable clouds, that roll
Through heaven's remorseless emptiness, will pause
To weep celestial drops of pity down
On hosts of earth's unnoticeable sons
Whom time is to oblivion hastening now.
And I myself ? . . . Before me dim, and drear,
And lurid, — hewn through the time-hardened mass
Of mortal misery, — I begin to see,
As by the light of battle-fires, my own
Predestined pathway to a bloody grave.

O thou blue heaven, that girdlest in cold peace
This groaning earth ! Behold, her weary womb
Travails, tormented with the endless birth
Of endless woes : yet is thine infinite calm
Untroubled by her infinite agony !

O Nature ! pitiless mother ! I go forth
Upon a perilous journey. But at length
I am about to live the life of man, —
The *natural* life, of man ! For I go forth
To fight my brothers. Sound thy trumpet, Time,
And bid me to the battle. My spirit is armed.

SCENE IV. — *After dark. A Hovel on a heath. At the door of the Hovel.*

A VOICE OUTSIDE.

What lives when it is buried ?

A VOICE INSIDE.

Liberty.

What wakes when it is slumbering ?

VOICE OUTSIDE.

Revenge.

VOICE INSIDE.

When the dogs bark, what doth the fox do ?

VOICE OUTSIDE.

Burrow.

VOICE INSIDE.

When the fox burrows, what do the geese ?

VOICE OUTSIDE.

Cackle.

VOICE INSIDE.

When the geese cackle, what do the cubs cry ?

VOICE OUTSIDE.

Panurge !

VOICE INSIDE.

Enter Lucius Junius Brutus !

[The Modern Brutus enters the Hovel.]

SCENE V.—*Noon. An apartment in the Castle. Orval, Muriel, and a Physician.*

ORVAL.

All science hitherto has failed. In you
Is my last hope.

PHYSICIAN.

Your lordship's confidence
Honors me much.

ORVAL.

Speak to him, Muriel.
Explain to him thy sensations, child.

MURIEL.

I neither
Can recognize you, Father, nor this gentleman.
Sparks of bright fire entangled in black webs
Before my eyes seem to be passing ever.
Sometimes it seems a crawling of black snakes

With glittering spots that sparkle as they glide
Into a twisted globe of dusky coils ;
Sometimes a golden cloud : then the cloud opens,
Breaks into sparks, stains, and soft colors, and all
Once more is darkness. But I feel no pain.

PHYSICIAN.

Come hither, little lord. What is his age ?

ORVAL.

'Twixt ten years and eleven.

DOCTOR.

Turn this way,
To the window . . . so, my boy.

ORVAL.

Well, Doctor ?

PHYSICIAN.

Well,
The eyelids are quite healthy. All the white
O' the eye is clear. The veins are not surcharged.
The nerves are sound, too. Have no fear, young
sir,
We soon shall cure you. (*To Orval.*) Not a
hope, my lord !
The pupil is insensible to light.
Complete paralysis of the optic nerve !

MURIEL.

All's dark around me. Utterly dark.

ORVAL.

Alas !

Those sightless orbs are staring at the sun.

MURIEL.

I can see better when I close my eyes.

PHYSICIAN.

The mind has wasted, here, the body's force.
You must beware of catalepsy.

ORVAL.

Anything

You please the half o' my fortune
all of it

If you but cure my son !

PHYSICIAN.

Science, my lord,

Has no capacity to compensate
Nature's defeat. We can do nothing here.
My duty to your lordship. I've a case
Of cataract in the neighborhood

ORVAL.

Stay, sir,

For mercy's sake as you are a Christian man
Leave us not thus ! Wait ! wait ! examine further.

PHYSICIAN.

Perhaps it might be interesting to you
To know the name of this disease

ORVAL.

No hope, then ?

Indeed no hope ? Indeed ?

PHYSICIAN.

'T is *amaurosis*.[*Exit.*]ORVAL (*embracing his son*).

But thou see'st yet, my child — my hope — my all !

A little yet ? Muriel, a little ?

MURIEL.

I can

Hear thy voice only, Father.

ORVAL.

Muriel,

Turn to the window. Look ! the day is clear,
The sun shines bright.

MURIEL.

I see, as though it were

A multitude of changing shapes that swim

Fast, fast, between the eyelid and the eye.

I seem to recognize amongst them things

I knew once — places I have seen — and scraps

Of books that I have read.

ORVAL.

Then thou seest yet ?

Muriel, thou seest yet ? the blind see not, boy.

But thou seest

MURIEL.

With my mind's eyes, Father, yes.

ORVAL (*kneeling*).

Great Spirit, that dwellest in eternal light,
Illumine those dark eyes . . .

[*Starting up.*]

Tush! 't is in vain.

Whom do I kneel to? For no prayers of mine
Are pathways to God's presence.

A VOICE BEHIND.

Thankless one,
Thy son is now a poet. Be satisfied.

SCENE VI. — *Night. At the sign of the Dragon. A sort of loft, accessible only from below by a ladder which is indistinctly seen through a dark aperture. In one part of the floor an iron ring is fastened, forming the handle to a trap-door. The loft is dimly lighted.*

THE MODERN BRUTUS (*alone*).

What, if Panurge were betraying us?
It wrongs my faith to fear it. But why all
These compromises, these delays, these pardons?
Or wherefore should he spare this man — the worst,
The proudest, and most powerful, of our foes?
He cannot fear him, cannot pity him,
And cannot need him. Why then these misgivings?
For, Orval gone, the head goes, and therewith
Must fall the body at once.

Well, I have leave
To test this brother's truth; who should be were

Already I think. He seems trustworthy, stout
 Of heart and will. Why did Panurge seem
 To be so sure the man would disobey
 The order I must give him ?

If he shrink

*[Lifts up the trap-door, — looks down, and closes it again
 with a sigh.]*

All is prepared.

O shame ! O worst of all,
 Mother, that we should ever be compelled
 By the strict justice of thine injured cause
 To sacrifice to thee one of thy sons,
 One of our brothers ! But be witness thou,
 Dread and dear Goddess, whom I breathe to serve
 And live to die for, that in all this world
 There 's nothing I love more than I love thee ;
 Nothing that from the deep and bitter cry
 Of thy great outraged heart mine own withholds,
 Nothing in me that is not thine ! O Mother,
 Is not thy cry forever in mine ears,
 Thy wrongs forever present to mine eyes,
 Thy patient centuries of suffering,
 Thy pains, and shames, and injuries, all mine,
 And thy predestined, though so long-delayed,
 Dominion the sole business of my thoughts ?
 My heart is virgin, and my soul sincere.
 Be witness, Mother, if it be my doom
 To smite a brother, 't is not that thy son
 I love not, Mother, but that I love thee
 More than he loved thee, the degenerate one !

[A distant clock strikes.]

The hour !

[Looking down the ladder.]

He comes.

[*A youth, meanly clad, enters by the ladder, which the Modern Brutus draws up, closing the aperture.*

Thou art exact.

THE YOUTH.

And thou.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Welcome, my brother !

THE YOUTH.

Thou hast seen the Chief ?

MODERN BRUTUS.

I have.

THE YOUTH.

And hast received the orders ?

MODERN BRUTUS.

Yes.

THE YOUTH.

The man's name, Brother ?

[*Modern Brutus whispers him.*

Orval ? all I feared !

MODERN BRUTUS.

Thou shrinkest ? Great the peril, if thou fail.

But men that are in earnest never fail.

Great is the peril, yes. Greater the cause,

Greater the glory . . . great if thou succeed,

Great if thou perish.

THE YOUTH.

Orval? why that man?
Brother, must that man die?

MODERN BRUTUS.

Brother, he *must*.
Thou knowest the forfeit?

THE YOUTH.

Ay. If that were all . . .

MODERN BRUTUS.

It is not all. By thee or by another
He dies. Thy death can save him not. And yet
Thou diest if he but live beyond the hour
Thine oath, to him, made final.

THE YOUTH.

Brother, listen!
This Orval is not as the others are;
Hopelessly unimprovable by time.
Hath he not pleaded for the People's Cause
Often?

MODERN BRUTUS.

For pastime, yes. When he was young.

THE YOUTH.

And who more loudly hath denounced than he
The wrongs we all have suffered from his class?

MODERN BRUTUS.

When ? when there seemed no chance of their redress.

To whom ? to those whose ears, he knew, were deaf.

Then it was safe. Friend, when mankind began
To dwell in cities, each behind him left,
In the wilds, his individuality.

In this, our modern epoch, every man,
High, low, or rich, or poor, is but a cork
Dropt by the purblind accident of birth
On one or other of the mighty waves
Of that most stormy sea, — Society.

He seems to move, but moves not : he is moved
By the elemental current. As the cork
Is by the wave it floats on, so the man
Is, by the class that he belongs to, borne
Where wind and tide, and not his own will, urge
him.

The man's capacity of choice, whate'er
It pleases him to call it, — judgment, will,
Or conscience — is, unconsciously to him,
Conditioned by the circumstance of what
Supports and bears him. When the skies are
clear,

And seas are calm, each cork that floats at ease,
Loose in its lazy element, hath leave
Of wind and wave to look this way and that,
And please itself with profitless selection
Of one or other prospect out of reach.
But when the storm comes, all are whirled, and
driven

Whichever way the waves, that bear them, beat.

THE YOUTH.

Not Orval. Ever from the titled tribe
 Of most ignoble men with noble names
 This man stood separate : and to them belongs
 No more than to the lowland the lone alp
 That from the lowland soars. Companionless
 He in his solitary conscience . . .

MODERN BRUTUS.

Tut !

In the long run, the conscience of a man
 Rests in the bosom of his class. The point
 Of individual honor is for each
 Fixt by the general interest of the whole.
 And if I say "the whole," I mean, of course,
 Merely the whole of those whose interests hang
 Together in one balance. The whole tribe
 Of bears, wolves, lions, tigers, have, no doubt,
 Interests in common to themselves, which we,
 The tribes of men, find much opposed to ours.
 But, being a man, when I say "Liberty,"
 I mean not liberty for tigers, wolves,
 Lions, and bears, but liberty for men ;
 Which may mean death to lions, and their like.

THE YOUTH.

Hast thou a mother ?

MODERN BRUTUS.

No.

THE YOUTH.

But once thou hadst ?

MODERN BRUTUS.

None but THE REVOLUTION. Motherless
And fatherless, and nameless have I lived,
Until I lived for what is now to me
Father and mother both . . . OUR CAUSE.

THE YOUTH.

Alas!

For then thou canst not understand.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Why not?

THE YOUTH.

Brother, that man once saved my mother's life.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Which, Son of Freedom, that man's life now kills.

THE YOUTH.

My father was — a vagrant and a thief
(For rich men have made poverty a crime).
He lived between the high road and the jail, —
Lived? starved — I scarce know how: died — on
the gallows.
We tramped, and tramped, — my mother and my-
self,
A mere brat then, — barefoot from barn to barn
To the great town, — to beg my father's life
Back from the hangman's hand, — and reached the
town
At dawn, — in time to join the gaping crowd
Beneath the scaffold where they strangled him.

My mother's shrieks disturbed the ceremony
Which they called Justice Vindicated, — marred
The Majesty of Law, — that was their phrase, —
They haled her to the jail, and from the jail
They haled her to the Justice. When a man
Insults some noble lady, what does she?
I know not. But I know that every word
That man said was an outrage, and a wrong,
An infamous wrong to womanhood; and I know,
While he was speaking, that my mother spat
In that man's face. Spit in the face of Justice?
A vagrant, and a tramp, a felon's wife?
Off with her to the whipping-post! Just then,
As they were dragging her away, — I think
I hear her shrieks yet, — see those eyes, — and see
The stare change in them from intensest terror
To indignation, as there came a sneer
Curling the courtly and contemptuous lip
Of some young noble who had lounged in there
Whilst strolling homeward from a night's de-
bauch. —
I think that sneer was not for my poor dam,
But her tormentors. But she knew not that.
The brute that held her had a knife in his belt.
She plucked it out, sprang loose, and stabbed the
youth.
The wound was skin-deep, but the skin was noble.
The crime was patent, and the sentence death,
Death by the wheel. O that last night of all
Passed with my wretched mother, in the den
Of their condemned ones! O the agony
When that door opened, as I deemed, on death,
The death of all I ever loved — my mother!
But it was life. 'T was the young noble's self

That came to save us. He had pleaded for her;
He brought her pardon she was free! O

Brother,

If you but knew what was the meaning *then*

Of that word *Free!* Brother, that noble's
name

Was Orval. Brother, Orval is the man

That spared my mother's life. I cannot kill him.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Alas! alas, my brother! O why, why
Fell not to me the glorious task? Call back
That hasty word, that breath that breaks an oath!
Brother, were men at peace, — man's great cause
gained,

The sword of Freedom sheathed, her banners furled,
Her troops disbanded, and her foes disperst,
We two might sit here, side by side, all night,
Praising this Orval for his one good deed:
And thou shouldst teach me thy dead mother's
name,

That I might teach, for that name's sake, this rough,
Coarse voice of mine, hoarse from harsh battle-cries,
To find out tenderer tones Were there but
time!

But there's no time, — no peace. We are at war,
And war hath two sides only, — Friend and Foe.
What separates foes from friends? A name: a
flag:

A uniform: the color of a coat:

Rude guides, but safe! No nice distinctions stop
War's brutal but inevitable path.

'T is not a man, it is a cause, we fight,

Though with the cause we strike the man. War's
 fault,
 And theirs that forced war on us, but not ours.
 My friend, my brother in arms, O let the dead
 Bury their dead ! Woe be to him whose hand
 Is on the plough if he turn back before
 The field be furrowed. I that never knelt
 To any man, behold, I kneel to thee !
 Brother, once more, wilt thou redeem thine oath ?

THE YOUTH.

Brother, once more, I will not.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Be it so.

Mine own I must redeem, then.

THE YOUTH.

How ?

MODERN BRUTUS.

Unheard,

Unseen. In silence, and in secrecy.
 Here, and at once. Ere long the time shall be,
 When the scorned Justice of The Revolution,
 Now forced to hide in holes and dens like this
 Her sacred head, and trust unwitnessed hands
 Like mine to do her bidding in the dark,
 Shall strike her victim on the public place,
 Crowds in the streets, crowds on the housetops,
 crowds
 Everywhere round her, to applaud the blow !
 Behold thy grave.

[*He opens the trap.*]

Mother of mighty times,
Goddess armipotent, whose strong right hand
Plucks down upon the heads of trembling kings
The mouldering masonries their slaves have built
Against the march of thy majestic hosts !
Fair harvester, whose foison, now full-cared,
Is ripening fast, large-hearted Liberty,
Look down, and bless thy victim, and thy priest.
Brother, one last embrace . . . brother no more !
Not I have torn our bond of brotherhood.
Pardon me, as I needs must pardon thee,
Unhappy youth ! Sad for thy sake am I
Who dare not spare thee, for the sake of Her
That claims, from me the blow, from thee the blood.
This is not murder ; it is sacrifice.
Thou hast been judged.

PANURGE (*suddenly appearing through the open trap*).
And art acquitted.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Thou !

How art thou here, Panurge ?

PANURGE.

Lucius Junius,
Wherever the Cause needs me, there am I.
What matter how ? Dost thou not know me yet ?
Brutus, withhold thine hand. Rise up, young man.
I have heard all. And, for thy broken oath
This once, I pardon thee.

MODERN BRUTUS.

My Chief, our laws . . .

PANURGE.

Enjoin unquestioning obedience,
 Brutus, to me. Not against human rights,
 But human wrongs, my banner is unfurled.
 This blood shall not be on it. States and thrones,
 And dynasties, and churches, have been founded
 On crimes ; whereof I hold the worst of all
 To be Ingratitude. Our empire, boy,
 Needs no such vile assistance. Lucius Junius,
 Open this door, and let that ladder down.

[*Brutus obeys in silence.*

(*To the Youth, in a whisper.*) Young man, I cannot save thee, nor thy friend,
 Beyond to-night. Lord Orval's life is doomed :
 His death is certain . . . save for the sole chance,
 The last, that's left to him . . . Let him know
 that . . .
 Flight. Instant flight. Let him know that, young
 man,
 If thou wouldst save him. Hush ! (*Aloud.*) Brutus,
 thou hast
 Served firmly, and served faithfully, the Cause.
 Blesséd are they that hear and do. Embrace
 Thy pardoned Brother.

MODERN BRUTUS.

He hath yet to prove
 He *is* my brother.

PANURGE.

And he shall. Away,
 Young man ! Thou hast thy brother's confidence
 To win back, — mine to justify. Depart.

(*Whispering.*) Make haste ! Thou hast not half
an hour to lose.

[*The Youth descends the ladder.*]

Did I not tell thee, Lucius Junius Brutus,
This man would fail us ?

MODERN BRUTUS.

But why pardon him ?
Why didst thou let him go ?

PANURGE.

Because I knew
That he would go to carry out my will.

MODERN BRUTUS.

What ! dost thou trust him yet ?

PANURGE.

Implicitly.

MODERN BRUTUS.

To do what ?

PANURGE.

To warn Orval.

MODERN BRUTUS.

To warn *him* ?
Wilt thou let *him* escape ?

PANURGE.

Unthinking boy !
How can he ? If he fly, he is lost. I fear,
I fear he will not fly !

MODERN BRUTUS.

But if he do ?

PANURGE.

Disgrace first, and death afterwards, for him.
 His life ? that 's nothing. But his influence ?
 That 's all. That 's what we must annihilate.
 Dost thou not see how easy it is to take
 This man's life ? but how difficult to take
 Its influence from the lives of other men ?
 'T is that which we must aim at. If he fly
 (Be satisfied, I have him in my net,
 He cannot 'scape me) — if he fly — why then,
 His influence flies with him, and is lost.
 Then, body and soul, and name and fame, he is
 mine !

Boy, there are lives and lives, and deaths and deaths.
 This man's life is impressed in palpable forms
 Upon the public mind ; and this man's death
 Must be impressed upon it also thus.
 'T is not enough for me to have his life.
 There 's too much of it living in his name.
 I must have both. I know that frightened hind,
 Soon as he leaves this house, will haste to warn him.
 My only fear is that he will not fly,
 So will he 'scape me. I shall have to weave
 New webs. But doubt not, I shall catch him yet.
 His mind to mine for mastery ? . . . We shall see !
 Now leave me, Brutus. I must be alone.

MODERN BRUTUS (*going*).

What, if Panurge is betraying us ?

SCENE VII.—*Night. A Chamber in the Castle. Lights, &c. Physician and Kinsmen.*

FIRST KINSMAN.

Undoubtedly. Most sad. But are you sure, sir?
Stone blind?

PHYSICIAN.

Unusual . . . extraordinary,
So young . . .

SECOND KINSMAN.

He always was a weakly child.
The mother died . . . you understand?

PHYSICIAN.

The mother?
How? . . . do you mean . . .?

SECOND KINSMAN.

Precisely.

ORVAL (*entering*).

Pardon me,
Gentlemen, for so long detaining you.
But 't is not till past midnight that of late
The crisis comes. Then he begins to speak.
Follow me. This way, Doctor.

THIRD RELATION.

After you, sir.

PHYSICIAN.

I am all anxiety to contemplate
This deeply interesting phenomenon.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII. — *A Bedchamber, dimly lighted. Orval, Physician, Nurse, and Kinsmen as before. Muriel asleep.*

FIRST KINSMAN.

Hush! Listen!

SECOND KINSMAN.

Is he awake? His eyes are open.
And yet he seems to hear not.

PHYSICIAN.

Gentlemen,
Really, I must entreat your silence.

SECOND KINSMAN.

Strange!

MURIEL (*rising*).

Away! away!

SECOND KINSMAN.

Mark! the arms folded.

FIRST KINSMAN.

Ay,
Upon the breast. He seems to walk as one
That walks with difficulty through a crowd.

PHYSICIAN.

Gentlemen, I entreat

NURSE.

Dear Lord !

MURIEL.

Avaunt,

Creatures of Darkness ! Am I not the son
Of Light and Song ? Where are my singing-ropes ?
Off, Hell-garb ! Who hath clad me in it ? Ye ?
What will ye with me ? Shall I yield to ye
The empire of my soul ? Ye ? I defy ye !
Never, abortive terrors, sullen shapes
Sent to torment me, never shall I be
The slave of him whose sceptre sent you forth !
Not though mine eyes be taken from me : mine
Mine eyes are still. I know where they are gone.
My mother bathes them in the light of Heaven :
They shall return to me, star-sighted, strong,
Sun-searching, splendid with sidereal fire.

FIRST KINSMAN.

Mad ! Just like his poor mother.

PHYSICIAN.

As I suspected.

NURSE.

O Holy Virgin, give the lad these eyes
Of mine, or I shall weep them blind as his !

SECOND KINSMAN.

It is a melancholy satisfaction
 Always, to be quite sure one can do nothing
 To mitigate the affliction of one's friends.

NURSE.

Lord ! Lord ! that I should live to hear him talk
 Like a proud Pagan, or wild man o' the woods,
 Or any other common creature ! I
 That suckled the poor brat at mine own breast,
 Ay, did I ! and a finer babe was never
 Put to the nipple. Many's the time I said it,
 "Look if our little lord (the Saints preserve him !)
 Come not to something great !" And, O Lord, Lord,
 To come to this !

PHYSICIAN.

Be silent, my good woman.
 This is extremely interesting.

FIRST KINSMAN.

Hist !

MURIEL.

Mother !

Dear Mother of mine in Heaven, I prithee send
 Down to me images of lovely things :
 That I, with these, may make me, here i' the midst
 Of this great darkness, Mother, a new world,
 Like that which I have lost.

SECOND KINSMAN.

What think you, Coz ?

PHYSICIAN.

Gentlemen, really

FIRST KINSMAN.

Listen !

MURIEL.

Come with me.

Let us go hence April hath gone before.
I know the way she went. And we shall find
Things dropt by her in the grass. Come down with
me

Into the dimmest wildness of the wood,
Where only here and there the hidden sun
Brightens the clear translucent green, and paves
Our whisperous path with drops of fire, that trickle
Through tender webs of winking shade. The moss
Is ever fresh and buxom to the foot
Under these low-bent boughs. I know a place
Quiet and happy, quite shut in with leaves
And flowers ; faint woodbine, and the bramble rose,
And freckled foxglove, cloven ivy, and loose
Convolvuluses, all the walls have woven
With fragrant broidery : and underneath
The pleasant grass is multitudinous all
With merry daisies thick as evening stars,
And plots of tufted thyme, and primroses,
Pale priestesses, with countenances calm
In sanctuaries of rough dewy leaves,
And cowslips, and anemones, and violets,
And crocuses, like points of windless flames
Tenderly curved and stained. This place is safe.
An old tree holds it in one arm of his.
The winds are warned to vex us not.

ORVAL.

Alas !

SECOND RELATION.

His talk is wholly unintelligible.

PHYSICIAN.

Precisely as I had anticipated.

MURIEL.

Ah, they have spoiled my palace ! Bud and leaf
Shattered ! Is no place safe from them ? Ah me,
Again the ghastly darkness ! Mother ! Mother !

FIRST KINSMAN.

I never saw such anguish in a face.

MURIEL.

Mother, I hear thee not. I hear thee not !
Leave me not all alone in the great darkness.
Oh !

SECOND KINSMAN.

What a moan !

[Muriel sinks back, exhausted, on the bed.]

PHYSICIAN.

My lord, it is my duty
To state the truth to you without reserve.

SECOND KINSMAN.

Ay, hear him, Cousin. Speak out, Doctor. Tell us
Precisely what this means.

PHYSICIAN.

My lord, your son

Is victim to a mental malady,
Superinduced by a too exquisite sense,
Become habitual, as I greatly fear,
Of his sad physical calamity.
Extreme cerebral agitation thus,
Acting upon a bodily frame o'erwrought
Already by the habit of a life
Somewhat too studious for his childish years,
Induces the condition of what, thus
Developed, as we find it here, my lord,
Must be called normal trance.

ORVAL.

Inscrutable

Lawgiver! hear how glibly doth this pedant
Explain thy laws!

PHYSICIAN.

A pen and ink, if you please.

We must try soothing remedies. I fear
'Tis no great use, though. *Laurei decoctio*
Aqua

ORVAL.

You will find all that you can want, sir,
In the next room. Go, — write out what you will.
Gentlemen, Cousins, I entreat your leave
To be alone.

KINSMEN.

Cousin, good night. Good night.

[*Exeunt with the Physician.*]

MURIEL (*waking*).

Good night ? . . . A long, long night ! They
 should have said
 A night without an end. Not good ! not good !
 Father, I am very tired.

ORVAL.

Lean on me, lad.
 So . . . Let me lift thee into bed.

MURIEL.

My sleep
 To-night was broken by strange voices, Father.
 Where are we ? If I could, I would sleep again.
 I am so tired.

ORVAL.

Sleep, my poor boy. Sleep sound.
 Thy father's blessing be upon thy dreams.
 My blessing ? Ah, what can my blessing give
 him ?

Not light, alas, nor health, nor joy, nor peace.
 Sleep, Muriel. Sleep, unhappy child !

For me
 The blood-red battle-dawn is breaking. Here
 There is no time for tears, none for regret !
 Soon, at the head of a half-barbarous
 Handful of men, must I go forth, to cope
 With the mad masses of mankind. And thou ?
 How shalt thou fare, poor boy ? — sick, helpless,
 blind !

Child-poet, with no audience in a world
 Of grown-up miseries ! Poor perishing bud,

Blighted from birth, and cankered in the green,
 Last of a lofty, old, illustrious tree !
 Sole, fragile scion of a haughty House
 Whose sires, of yore, in iron harness trod
 Tremendous fields, and bearded brawling kings.
 Farewell ! O heart of mine, bear up, bear up
 Against this load — Break not, thou stubborn
 heart !

Let all break on thee, till this breaking world
 Be ended. Sleep, my son. He sleeps already.
 And, sleeping, smiles ah, not on *me* ! Once
 more,
 Once more one last sad kiss and
 then farewell,
 Thou most unfortunate of the angels strayed
 From Heaven !

ANDREW (*entering hastily*).

My lord, the man that brought this letter
 Refused to wait : but left it, vehemently
 Affirming it to be of urgent import,
 Concerning nothing less than life or death
 Or imminent danger to your lordship.

ORVAL.

Good.

Leave it. And leave me.

[*Exit Servant.*]

I am weary of all things.
 Life can bring nothing new not even death.

[*Opens the letter, languidly, and reads.*]

" *Thine hours are counted. Fly, Lord Orval, fly !
 There is no inch of all this land that's safe*

*For thee to stand on. The Sworn Brotherhood
Are sworn to have thy life. Their hands are lifted
Invisibly against thee, everywhere :
Their daggers are all round thee, day and night,
When the air seems most empty ; and their eyes,
Unseen, are on thee. Linger not an hour.
One whom thou hast befriended ; and that knows
More than he may reveal.*

“ Burn this. And fly.”

I fly ? He little knows me that wrote this.

[Burns the letter in the candle.]

THE NURSE.

My lord, the Doctor asks your presence.

ORVAL.

I come.

Rest by the boy. And watch him well. He sleeps.
. . . . Rather to arms at once ! to arms ! Arise,
Arise, mine eagle ! Havoc calls. I come.

END OF THE THIRD EPOCH.

FOURTH EPOCH.

MAN AND MAN.

SCENE I.—*Night. Interior of a subterranean Cellar; filthy, and ill-lighted by a lantern swung from the vaulting. Along the walls pistols and cutlasses suspended. On the floor broken wine-flasks and empty barrels strewn about. In the midst, under the lantern, a rude table. Thereon a greasy volume open: pens, ink in a broken wineglass, and a large earthen bowl smeared over the edges with blood. On a sort of altar, a skeleton gorgeously robed and crowned. Tapers burning before it. Between the altar and the table a small high platform, covered with crimson cloth, and canopied in black. On the platform is seated the President of the Secret Society of THE AVENGERS. Before him, at the foot of the platform, a Novice, kneeling, with hands bound, breast bare, and marks of blood upon it. The rest of the Brotherhood is grouped around the Novice.*

THE PRESIDENT.



ND to maintain inviolate secrecy.

THE NOVICE.

I swear. So help me God!

PRESIDENT.

Citizen Novice,
Thy tongue trips. Have a care. There is no God.
We have deposed him. He was in our way,

For, being a tyrant, he made common cause
With the other tyrants. Bring the symbol forth
Of brutish Superstition.

[One of the brethren brings forward a crucifix.]

Man, behold
The no-more-to-be-tolerated badge
Of thy past degradation. Spit on it.

NOVICE.

Citizen Atheist, I obey.

PRESIDENT.

Remove it.
He hath saved his throat.

THE BROTHER.

Back to thy tomb, defunct
Divinity !

THE PRESIDENT.

To spare not man, nor woman,
Against whose life the edict hath gone forth.

NOVICE.

I swear.

PRESIDENT.

To execute, without remorse,
Without reluctance, and without delay,
Whatever order shall be given to thee.

NOVICE.

I swear.

THE PRESIDENT.

Upon all persons, old or young,
Or high or low, or great or small, or here
Or elsewhere, nobles, prelates, princes, kings,
Or those that do adhere to the same.

NOVICE.

I swear.

PRESIDENT.

And to observe the aforesaid laws to the death.

NOVICE.

I swear.

PRESIDENT.

He hath passed the triple ordeal.
Enter his name upon the Books.

A BROTHER (*writing*).

Josiah

Cobble. Eyes gray, small. Hair red. Stature
low.

Age four-and-twenty years. Former condition,
Maker of boots and shoes in the employ
Of the Enemies of Human Freedom. Sworn
A Brother of the Secret Philosophical
And Philanthropical Society
Of the AVENGERS: sitting in this city
On the First Day of the Second Month o' the Year
One, of the General Emancipation.
Entered.

PRESIDENT.

Unbind his hands. Give him the bowl.
Rise, Brother, and embrace thy brethren. Drink.

CHORUS OF THE UNITED BROTHERHOOD.

Press the grapes of the vintage of vengeance.
Thine,

Young vintager, now is the vineyard gate.
And drink, Son of Freedom, the blood and the wine :
The wine of the wanton, the blood of the great !
Fallen thy bonds are. Behold, we have burst them.

Laugh ! Not on nectar the old gods nurst
The growth of the young gods, who have disperst
them :

And stronger than nectar, to quench our
thirst,
Is the cup of the curses wherewith we have curst
them

By whom we were curst.
Feed on the flesh of the princes of earth.

Let it fatten thee now, as our own fattened
them.

There be plenty of bones, and of blood no dearth :
And these dishes are garnisht with gold and
gem.

Signed are the lintels, and sharpened the daggers.
The powerless strikes, and the powerful staggers.

The halters are spun.
Judged are the judges : rod-beaten the lictors :
Tried the tribunals : and vanquisht the victors :
The heads are all reckoned : the headsman is
beckoned :

Our work hath begun.

[*A knocking without.*

PRESIDENT.

Back to your places, all of you ! Remove
Those weapons. Each man to his work again.
Who knocks ?

A VOICE OUTSIDE.

A friend, and Freedom's Son.

PRESIDENT.

His name ?

THE VOICE.

Lucius Junius.

PRESIDENT.

'T is the Modern Brutus !
Salute him, Brothers. Open in the name
Of Liberty. Hail to thee, Lucius Junius !

[The Modern Brutus enters.]

OMNES.

Brutus, thy brethren here, in thee, salute
The soul of Rome's best Roman.

BRUTUS.

Good, friends, good !
I see that you are sharpening your knives
Ready for use. Good, good ! Be all prepared.
What art thou making, Brother Citizen ?

ONE OF THE BRETHREN.

A hempen rope.

BRUTUS.

Good! He that 'scapes the steel
Must hang by the cord. And thou?

ANOTHER.

I stole this knife
Out of the kitchen of an old Archbishop.
And it has sliced him many an ortolan.
I am giving it a new handle, and an edge.

BRUTUS.

Good, good! Some throats are easier cut than ca-
pons.
And thou?

A THIRD.

This is the fowling-piece with which
The keeper of my lord shot my boy, Jack,
For having stolen a hare. The man had this
When, last night, I shot *him*. I took it from him.
It is a keepsake. I am giving it
A new lock.

BRUTUS.

Good, good! There be other vermin
Than hares that now need thinning. Keep the gun.

PRESIDENT.

But tell us, Brother Citizen, is the day
Fixt yet?

BRUTUS.

O patience, Citizen President!
I want a man of you. Which is the idlest?
Or which the boldest?

PRESIDENT.

There 's a novice here
That hath not yet been tried. Wilt thou have him ?
He took the oath but even now.

BRUTUS.

Good, good !
Follow me, Brother Novice.

NOVICE.

I obey.

SCENE II. — *Noon. The Revolutionary Camp. Within the Tent of Panurge. Citizens armed, standing sentry. Shouting without.*

PANURGE (*entering the tent*).

How many hundred brainless brutes have howled
Hurrah to every word that from my lips
Hath fallen just now ! What one of all them
Divined my simplest meaning, comprehended
The plainest of my purposes, or caught
The faintest glimmer of the goal to which
My will is leading them ? *O fervide*
Imitatorum pecus !

[*The Modern Brutus enters with the Novice.*

Is it the man ?

BRUTUS.

Ay.

PANURGE.

Dost thou know Lord Orval ?

NOVICE.

Know him? Yes,
By sight, great Citizen. He once spoke to me.

PANURGE.

In truth? what said he?

NOVICE.

At the church door once,
Meaning no harm, I brusht him as I passed.
He turned, and kicked me, adding, with an oath,
“ Out of my way, hound ! ” I have made a rope
To hang him with. ’T is ever in my pocket.

PANURGE.

To-morrow thou wilt go to him, at daybreak :
And say to him that I intend to see him ;
That I will visit him at midnight, tell him,
Alone — in private — without witnesses.

NOVICE.

Citizen General, how many men
Do you propose to give me ?

PANURGE.

Not a man.

NOVICE.

There will be danger. With no escort

PANURGE.

Thine escort is Panurge’s name. Alone
Thou must approach him.

Man,

NOVICE.

I obey.

PANURGE.

And tell him,
For certain, that to-morrow — at midnight —
I shall be with him.

NOVICE.

And if he should hang me ?

PANURGE.

Thou wilt have had the honor, then, to perish
A martyr to the People's Cause.

NOVICE.

Long live
The People's Cause ! (The Devil take 'em
all !)

PANURGE.

And now good day, good Citizen. Depart.
Forget not.

NOVICE.

Citizen General, I obey.

[Exit.

BRUTUS.

Why these half-measures, these delays, Panurge ?
Or to what end these midnight meetings with
The People's foes ? these parleyings with a man

Like Orval ? Had I but thy sanction then
When I besought it, Orval at this hour
Had not been living. And that snare of thine
To catch him flying hath failed egregiously.
Flight ? he is in the field against us now,
First, foremost, and sole formidable foe !
Panurge, when I vowed to follow thee,
To admire thee, to obey thee, — when I made
Thee master of my mind, — it was because
I then believed thee master of thine own :
A man of keen eye and sure hand : a man
Of one aim, and one blow.

PANURGE.

Peace, prattler, peace !

BRUTUS.

All is in readiness. The arms are forged,
The cannon cast, the powder magazined,
And the battalions drilled, and the lists drawn.
Our troops wait only for the word to move.
The lightnings and the thunders of our power
Vibrate impatient in thy slack right hand.
Speak the word only, and the thunder falls.

PANURGE.

Rash boy ! thy hot brain and o'erweening youth
Know not the majesty of restraint. Mistake not
Impulse for power.

BRUTUS.

Nay, think, Panurge ! think !
Already these amazed aristocrats,

Terrified, trembling, fly like a tame herd
 That scents the unseen lion. Abandoning
 To desolation their doomed palaces,
 And paper-palisaded castles all,
 They have assembled their unscattered strengths
 In the firm-masoned Fastness of St. John.
 We with our legions need but flood the land
 To overwhelm them in their last retreat.
 Our dogs might in a day destroy such rabbits
 In such a warren. Give the word.

PANURGE.

Not yet.

What need of haste ? Their doom is sure. Ef-
 fete

Both morally and physically, weak
 Old toothless lapdogs whelped by Luxury,
 Nature, the hardy mother of brave men,
 Spurns them with loathing from her wholesome lap.
 And, whether it be to-morrow or to-day
 That we exterminate the litter, boy,
 It matters not the weight of a hair. Go to.
 I know my hour.

BRUTUS.

What daunts thee, then ?

PANURGE.

Naught daunts me.

I am but the Doomsman. Nature is the Judge.

BRUTUS.

Albeit, when Nature's voice cries to thee, "Strike!"
 What stays thy laggard hand thus ?

PANURGE.

Mine own will :

Thy master, Lucius, Junius, Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Psha !

Thy will ? who knows ? Thy whim, more like.

And I,

Whose hand hath smitten upon their guilty thrones

The consecrated tyrannies of time,

Whose knee was never crooked to man or God,

Who fear no consequence, and spare no foe,

Am I to follow blindly the blind guidance

Of thy dark brain ?

PANURGE.

Blindly. It is thine oath.

BRUTUS.

Thou art betraying us, Panurge !

PANURGE.

Tush !

Mistrust is the hobgoblin of weak minds.

For there where ignorance doth a darkness make,

Any old broomstick serves to make a fear.

But have a care. Speak not so loud, young man.

Some of my folk might hear thee.

BRUTUS.

Of *thy* folk ?*Our* folk ! We have no spies here. And what
then ?

My speech is my true heart's ambassador
That scorns disguise, and boldly goes his way
To challenge Falsehood where he finds her. Man,
What if our folk *do* hear my voice ?

PANURGE.

Why, then
I shall be forced to have thee shot, for daring
To raise it in my presence.
[With sudden tenderness.
Trust me, boy.

Have patience.

BRUTUS (*with emotion*).

Pardon ! I forgot myself.
But (*earnestly*), Chief, I fear not death in any form.
And if my death be necessary, if
My death can help or serve the People's Cause,
Serve only, even, for salutary example,
Speak ! I am ready to die.

PANURGE.

(An ardent mind !
This man *believes* and *hopes*. It is a pity
That such a happy man should ever die.
Earth hath too few of his thrice-fortunate kind,
And cannot profitably spare what she
So rarely is possest of.) Boy, think more.
Speak less. Grow older. *Live*. And in good time
Thou wilt be able to understand . . . Delay.
Are the new cartridges distributed ?

BRUTUS.

Yes.

PANURGE.

Dost thou know no more of this Lord Orval ?

BRUTUS.

No. Why ? In truth, I care to know no more
Than is already known of that bad man.

PANURGE.

He hath assembled all his vassals. And they
Are faithful to him. They believe in him.
They follow him, and still look up to him.

BRUTUS.

A handful of born slaves ! It is in us
Faith's true force is incarnate.

PANURGE.

I would see him —
With mine own eyes . . . hear him — with mine
own ears —
Not thine . . . and read the soul of this strange
man.
Too proud he is ! too proud. Pride must be humbled.
He should be one of Us.

BRUTUS.

He ? One of us ?

He, the *aristocrat* !

PANURGE.

No. He, the *poet*.
You understand not. Leave me.

BRUTUS.

Am I pardoned,

Citizen General?

PANURGE.

Boy, wert thou *not* . . . But go!
Leave me. Thy life belongs to the Good Cause.
I charge thee keep it safe. Boy, thine own hand
Shall plant the People's Flag upon the towers
And roof-tops of the Fastness of St. John.
Now leave me.

BRUTUS (*going*).

Truly, he is a great man.
How could I doubt him? Out, base heart!

[*Exit.*]PANURGE (*alone*).

Ay, Orval!

It must be with mine own eyes only, and only
In thine own face, that I the riddle read,
Writ by the Destinies for thee and me.
Strange, that this man, alone of all the world,
Dares to resist me! What, compared to mine,
Is this man's strength? Nothing. It cannot weigh
A dozen grains of sand i' the scale. Some few
Raw boors, and stupid serfs, that follow yet
The blazoned boast of his affronting flag,
With that blind instinct of fidelity
That's ever in tame creatures. Nothing more.
Why do I wish to see, to hold discourse
With this one man? Hath my own spirit now been
Confronted, for the first time, with its peer?
Perchance its rival? . . . I must crush — *shall*
crush him.

But then? O thou mysterious Power of
 Thought,
 That in me sittest, weaving webs to catch
 The buzzing folly of this brief fly, man!
 Easier shalt thou deceive all human kind
 Than thine own self. What? Art thou not the
 thought
 Of earth's unthinking millions? the bright soul
 O' the brute material multitude? And thou,
 Doubtest thou of thyself? What were but crime
 In others, is, in thee, completed law,
 Power fulfilled and perfect. Thou hast given
 A name to nameless masses of mankind,
 A language to dumb droves of beasts of burden,
 A soul to soulless human engines,—called
 Forth out of formless chaos, and created
 A whole world's manifest fabric in the form
 And image of thyself, and breathed into it
 A motion and a light. But thou thyself,
 O soul, what art thou? shapeless? doubting? dark?
 Uncertain of the goal to which thou goest?
 Nay then, I swear it, soul, thou art sublime!

SCENE III. — *Sunset, which deepens towards the close of the scene. The Forest. Booths, tents, canvas encampments. Torchfires, and wandering lights among the distant trees. A space cleared in the midst, with a rude gallows erected. Men and women dancing round it. Various groups passing over the foreground. ORVAL and THE NOVICE. Orval advances, holding the Novice by the hand, who follows reluctantly. Orval is enveloped in a long mantle, and wears the Cap of Liberty.*

ORVAL.

Remember!

NOVICE.

On my life, my lord, I swear it !
I will return you safely — if myself
Do 'scape the perils you have put upon us
By this most desperate venture.

ORVAL.

Glance of eye,
Or turn of head, and at my foot thou liest,
A bullet in thy skull. Sir, I am armed.
And — mark me ! — I am risking my own life, —
Thine hath for me less value than a dog's.

NOVICE.

Hi ! You will crush my wrist-bone ! Zounds,
my lord,
Your hand hath iron claws ! How must I serve
you ?

ORVAL.

Address me as a comrade — newly come.
What are those — dancing yonder ?

NOVICE.

Round the gallows ?
That is the new dance of the Libertines, —
Freedom's bolero.

ORVAL.

On, then ! let us see it.

CHORUS (*of men and women, half naked, dancing round the gallows in caps of Liberty*).

Bread to eat! bread to eat!

Or we will have heads to gnaw.

We have cooked the cooks that cooked the meat,

And so we must eat it raw.

Hourrah!

For, that men should starve while there's flesh
to carve,

Is neither logic nor law,

Hourrah!

Kings have had no pity on us:

Dance about the gallows!

Priests have had no pity on us:

Dance! dance, good fellows!

God hath had no pity on us:

Dance about the gallows!

Down, then, with God, and with Priests, and Kings!

Enough, and too much have we had of these things!

Dance, dance, good fellows!

ORVAL (*to a girl dancing*).

Wench, I rejoice to see thee step so brisk.

Thy leg is stockingless, — but, 'faith! 't is stout,

And jigs it bravely!

THE GIRL (*dancing*).

God a' mercy, man!

This day hath kept us waiting long enough.

All my life long have I washed dishes up,

And scoured floors, — ay, with never a good word,

Never a Thank-ye! Only cuffs and kicks,

And offal, when the dogs had had enough.

ORVAL.

NOVICE.

ORVAL.

NOVICE.

ORVAL.

NOVICE.

ORVAL.

NOVICE (*aside*).

Hosted by Google

FIRST LACKEY.

Yes, friend : I had the honor
To slit *my* master's throat last night.

SECOND LACKEY.

Fine fellow !

Your health. I'm looking for my Baron still.

A VALET.

Citizens, pray let us admire ourselves !
Already — long ago — whilst blacking boots,
Even till our backs grew crooked, — long ago,
Whilst curling wigs, and powdering noble pates,
Even till our own waxed bald, . . . we felt within
us

The glorious consciousness of our own rights.
Not vainly have we stood behind the chairs
Of sage Philosophers, and heard them talk :
Whilst stirring up the chocolate we served them,
They stirred in us the philosophic soul !
Not vainly by the tables of the great
Have we been watchers : secrets, grudged to kings,
Slipped out to us. And truly, if we cringed
To carry the bread-basket up and down,
Whilst for the banquet we did count out loaves,
We for the scaffold then were counting heads.
Ay ! and if, when we poured the wine, we smiled,
It was because the wine began to smell
Already like the blood it was enriching
For us to taste hereafter ! Drink, then, all,
Drink, Citizens, with me . . . health to our
Club !

CHORUS OF LACKEYS.

Health to our Club! and to our President!
For he is a Philosopher! Drink death
To all our Masters! Live Philosophy!
Live Freedom, and the Rights of Man!

THE VALET.

My friends,
I thank you, — with emotion, not unworthy
The generous sentiments you have expressed.

CHORUS OF LACKEYS.

Broken! broken are the bonds of servile duty!
Burst at length in man's supreme emancipation!
From the boudoirs, perfumed sweet, of painted
Beauty,
From the languid-lighted halls and haunts of
Fashion,
From the satin-circled walls and scented ambers
Of the sleek and whisper-swarmling antechambers
Of dethroned Royalty,
And the primly paced saloons of Art and Science,
We together are come forth to hurl defiance
On the victor-voice of Freedom, freely, under the
free sky,
At the doors where courtiers cringe,
Slaves to every creaking hinge,
Creatures to a golden key, and students of a lie!

SEMI-CHORUS.

And the statesman, with his scheme
Of little frauds to cheat the state:

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

And the poet with his theme
Of little flatteries to the great :

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

And the soldier, o'er his sword
Ducking to the slave he serves :
And the king, whose kingly word
Shifts each way his terror swerves !

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

And the dainty Dame of Honor !
With the badge of shame upon her !

CHORUS.

We have seen, and we can tell
All that 's hid 'twixt Heaven and Hell !

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

What was whispered shall be shoutéd !
What was trusted shall be doubted !
What was honored shall be scouted !

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

What was unknown all shall know !
What was high shall then be low.
For such secrets blood must flow.

CHORUS.

Ay, such filth to be washed clean,
Blood shall flow of King and Queen.
Such strange sickness needs strange cures.
This is our *Credo*. What is yours ?

ORVAL.

Excellent company ! Why these are men
Of rarest information, — full of matter !
What are those voices from the hill, that sound
Like wild beasts howling ?

NOVICE.

'T is the Butchers' Club.

CHORUS OF BUTCHERS.

Hatchet and axe
Shall pay no tax
To any king on his throne,
Whilst bones and blood
Are the People's food,
So keep ye the blood and the bone,
Hah ha !
Keep ye the blood and the bone !
We are The Jolly Butchers, we :
Our purple palace the shambles be.
Hither, good fellows, and sing with me,
Merrily, merrily sing ; —
Cutting of throats is a rare good trade !
For love, or for money, — 't is all one thing.
And it matters not if a knife be laid
To the throat of a calf or a king,
Hah ha !
For a calf will bleed like a king !
We are the children of Strength and Blood :
And we know what blood and strength can do.
It is we that find the People food,
Though the kings provide for the business too.
To every man his due, my friend,
To every man his due !

For the kings we have slaughtered the calf and ox :
 For the People we slaughter the kings.
 While there's flesh in the shambles or blood on
 the blocks,
 The Jolly Butcherman sings,
 Hah ha !
 The Jolly Butcherman sings :
 Hatchet and axe
 Shall pay no tax
 To any king on his throne :
 For bones and blood
 Are the People's food,
 So keep ye the blood and the bone,
 Hah ha !
 Make much of the blood and the bone !

ORVAL.

I like these fellows better. They, at least,
 Have grace to leave Philosophy alone,
 And spare us that vile cant, that sickens me,
 Of Freedom, and Enlightenment, and so forth.
 Madam, your Humble Servant !

NOVICE.

You forget !

Pray call her Citizen, or Freedom's Daughter,
 Or else Emancipated Bondswoman.
 You will destroy us with your old-world titles.
 As you love life, be careful !

THE WOMAN.

Madam, quotha ?

What is this fellow ? Fy ! O thou dost stink
 Most villanous strong, methinks, of the old leaven !

ORVAL.

'Faith! my tongue tripped then.

THE WOMAN.

Man, I am as thou.
A woman — free — unfettered — independent!
My favors I distribute without stint
To that society whence I derive
The rights I exercise in doing thus.
To all free men, freely, I give my love.
Hark! . . . an' thou hadst not such a frosty eye . . .
Thou art a sturdy knave . . . I like thee well . . .
Kiss!

ORVAL.

And, pray, hath this same society
Given thee also, worthiest of women,
These jewels? that gold bracelet? those pearl ear-
rings?
O most exceeding generosity!
O rare, beneficent Society!

THE WOMAN.

This trash? . . . and yet 't is pretty . . . truly,
pearls
Suit well enough this sort of hair! . . . Nay, these
Were given me by my husband — I would say
My enemy — the enemy of Woman —
The enemy of Liberty and Love —
In the old days, ere I enjoyed my freedom.
Husbands are Man's and Woman's Enemies!

ORVAL.

Freest of women, verily I wish thee
An infinite enjoyment!

[They pass on.]

Knowest thou

Who is yon soldier, leaning all alone,
I' the rocky ground, against the blasted oak?
How doth he eye the setting sun!

NOVICE.

He yonder?

O, he is Fortune's soldier. Brave enough!
But yet — a hireling. I do know the man.
The Revolution hath employed him thrice
In divers foreign countries. He hath won
Nine battles — taken seven towns . . .

Good eve,

General Castrocara! What! already
Planning campaigns? some new design afoot?

THE SOLDIER.

Fools! Though in Freedom ye may be my brothers,
In Genius ye are not my kindred. Go!
My plans are known but by the victories
Which they achieve. Disturb me not. Away!

ORVAL.

Hark ye! Take my advice. Hang up that fellow.
Hang him to-night. This, trust me, is the stuff
That makes an Aristocracy.

A WEAVER.

Too late!

Curses, and maledictions!

ORVAL.

What is this ?

NOVICE.

No beggar, or he would be better clothed.

ORVAL.

What dost thou there in the rank ditch, poor wretch ?
Why, how now ? Look ! there is not so much skin
Upon this mummy, sir, as would suffice
To cover the whole compass of thy valor !

WEAVER.

Curses, and maledictions ! Curse, and curse,
And curse, again, the Merchants of the Earth !

ORVAL.

This knave is strong in the arithmetic.
Hark, how he adds and multiplies ! And yet
Methinks he doth repeat himself too oft.

WEAVER.

Accurséd be the Merchants of the Earth !
For they have sucked the life-blood out of me.
My fairest years, — the years when other men
Wander about the free and happy fields,
In blissful hand-in-hand with her they love,
And breathe the blesséd air, and the fresh flowers,
Till they bless God that they are young, and live,
And do enjoy the joyfulness of living, —
I evermore was weaving my death-shroud
At their rapacious and remorseless looms ;
Confined alive in their damned factories !

ORVAL.

Drink, then, the cup thou clutchest in thy hand.
The wine will yet refresh thee.

WEAVER.

Late! too late!

I have no strength to lift it to my lips.
I have crawled here to die. Alas! for me
The Day of Freedom dawns too late. I curse
The Merchants of the Earth that do sell silk!
Ay, and the Princes of the Earth that wear it!
I curse the Trader, for he buys men's bodies!
I curse the Courtier, for his glossy coat
Is woven from the fibre of men's lives!
Curses, and maledictions! curses, curs—
[*He dies.*]

NOVICE.

Pah, what a hideous corpse! It stinks already.

ORVAL.

Look on this carrion, miserable hound!
Where now be your big-mouthéd promises?
Where be your virtues? your philosophies?
What now? the dust hath claimed fraternity
With your free brother. Warn the worm away,
Lest he make free with this starved inch of Free-
dom;
For he is Nature's tyrant; and it seems
He loves a savory meal. Come, Citizen,
And study here the perfect state of man!
The Emancipation of the Human Race!

NOVICE (*aside*).

Insolent Noble! may thy carcass too
Rot ere 'tis older, and the dogs devour it!
(*Aloud.*) My lord, we must away! The sun
hangs low.

And I am sworn to give account this night,
To him that sent me, of my mission.

ORVAL.

Hold!

I have a fancy to see more of this.
March! march, sir!

A VOICE FROM THE TREES.

Son of Freedom, bid good-night
To the old Sun!

ANOTHER VOICE FROM THE FOREST.

Good night to thee, old tyrant!
I do salute thee with a parting curse.
Long while hast thou our hard taskmaster been.
Long hast thou driven us to labor, forth
From stall and shed, — to sweat, and still to groan;
Thou only smiling from thy golden chair
Up yonder, evermore the same damned smile.
To-morrow shalt thou find thy slaves set free.
Now to the devil with thee! off! give place
To the Dark Hour, our friend.

NOVICE.

Here comes a band
Of peasants. We must draw aside, my lord,
Or we shall be accosted.

PEASANTS (*passing*).

Forwards, friends!

Yonder, among the booths, the girls are dancing.
 What fun! d'ye hear the fiddle squeak? up yonder
 'There's beer and wine, and cakes, and junketing.
 And there our friends are roasting for us all
 'The oxen from the plough! Hourrah! hourrah!

A GIRL'S VOICE FROM THE CROWD.

March! march, old guts! This is a lazy lord.
 Kick him up, wooden-shoes! That's right.

VOICE OF A NOBLE.

Good friends,
 Mercy! I am an old man. Mercy! mercy!

A MAN'S VOICE.

The more sins, then, hast thou to answer, gray-
 beard!
 Yah-ha! O, Kate hath got him. Take her off.
 There's ne'er a terrier hath a sharper tooth
 Than Kate. She'll kill him!

THE NOBLE'S VOICE.

Friends, if you would hear me!

A GIRL'S VOICE.

Give back my lover's blood, my father's curse!

A MAN'S VOICE.

Give back to me my long days of forced labor!

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Give back my poor boy that was flogged to death !

A MAN'S VOICE.

Give back, give back to me my daughter's shame !

OTHER VOICES.

Up with him ! By the devil's beard, old sir,
You shall hang high, as suits a gentleman !

THE NOBLE'S VOICE.

Children, . . . why I might be your father !
Mercy !

Indeed I never meant you any wrong.
And, if I did you wrong and knew it not,
I do repent me. Look on these gray hairs.
An old man's blood, what can it profit you ?
Sins have I, that is sure, to answer for,
But which among you must not say the same ?
O, let me live ! take anything but life,
For that is robbing God, whose gift it is !
And I will give you up my parks, and manors,
My castles, and my summer villas all.
And you shall have my bailiffs, all of them,
To roast, or hang, or anything you please.
If these have done you wrong, I knew it not.

A MAN'S VOICE.

If you talk more, we'll put a pitchfork through
you.
Come, hoist him ! We shall miss the dancing Jse.

CHORUS OF PEASANTS.

A bluebottle fly of Beëlzebub
 Came buzz on the hive of the working bees,
 We have clipped the wing of this gilded grub,
 And we bring him now to rot at his ease.
 Their Lordships' lordly carcasses
 Shall be thick as straw on the stubble lands.
 When their castles burn like furnaces,
 We shall have fuel to warm our hands.
 As for us, who are hungry, and poor, and cold,
 And weary enough of the long day's work,
 We must have fire, food, slumber, and gold,
 So up with the torch and the three-pronged
 fork !

[They pass on.]

ORVAL.

I could not mark his features in the crowd,
 Nor recognize his voice.

NOVICE.

No doubt it was
 One of your Lordship's noble friends or kinsmen.

ORVAL.

Whoe'er he was, I care not. I despise him.
 For he will die, a coward. Him I scorn,
 And thee I loathe. Move on, sir ! Here's a path
 Should lead us somewhere. Bah ! some day, who
 knows ?
 We shall make poetry of all this filth.
 Come, sirrah ! Do you hear me ?

[They disappear into the forest.]

SCENE IV. — *Night. Another part of the forest. Moonlight at intervals. In the background, the ruins of a Church, and in the midst of the ruins the Altar of Reason lighted. The ground broken and uneven. The scene frequently obscured. Confused noises in all directions. ORVAL and the NOVICE.*

ORVAL.

This fine red foolscap hath been torn to tatters
Down there i' the brushwood. What are those
 strange fires
Among the ruins ?

NOVICE.

 We have lost our way
In the low thickets. As I fancied, this
Must be the heart of the forest. Those red fires
Are from the altars of the New Religion,
Where Amathusius, nightly, at this hour,
Initiates the neophytes.

ORVAL.

 Come on, then,
And let us look at the New Prophet !

NOVICE.

Softly !

Here every step is on the chance of death.
We are approaching to the sanctuary.
Cover thy face !

ORVAL.

 Ay ! round these steps are strewn
The ruins of the centuries ! Here lies
The old colossus of the Christian World

Tumbled in splinters. Column, capital,
 Arch, shaft, niche, statue, pedestal, and plinth,
 A heap of undistinguishable stones !
 My heel strikes on the images of saints.
 Sharp morsels of stained glass, the costly work
 Of noble masters who praised God with power,
 And worshipped as they worked, where'er I walk
 Crackle and fly to bits beneath my foot.
 The moon, it seems, too, dare not look this way.
 Have a care, sirrah, how you pick your steps !
 Here 't is pitch dark.

This should have been some cloister
 Once, — by the clammy travertine that peels
 Under my finger from the crumbled wall.
 Pah ! . . . and the frescos here, do they sweat
 blood ?

My hand is wet !

Thank Heaven ! a gleam of light
 Shows yonder grating like the bars of Hell.
 What have we here ? A marble warrior sleeping
 Upon a marble tomb. He hath not waked,
 Though on his head the roof hath fallen down.
 He must have fought hard to deserve such rest.
 To sleep thus were to be supremely blest !
 For he that sleeps, sleeps for himself ; but he
 That waketh, knoweth not for what he wakes.
 Where are we ?

NOVICE.

Forty days and forty nights
 Our people toiled here at the axe and crow-bar.
 We have destroyed the last of all the churches.
 This was the graveyard.

[Distant songs faintly heard.]

ORVAL.

Men of the new times,
 Your songs delight me not ! Before, behind,
 Here — there — and everywhere, where'er I gaze,
 Dimly I see faint shadows and pale lights,
 That pass and wander all among these ruins :
 From place to place they float on the night winds :
 They hover to and fro, and find no rest,
 But, with an ever-wavering motion, mix
 Their lifeless ghosts among the living throng
 Of men and women yonder. This night's heart
 Must have a guilty conscience ! Pause we here.

VOICES RAPIDLY PASSING ONWARDS.

First Voice. Hail, Brothers, in the name of Liberty !

Second Voice. Hail, Brothers, by the baptism of
 blood !

Third Voice. Hail, Brothers, to the Light of Reason,
 hail !

Fourth Voice. Haste ! haste, or ye will be too late !
 The Priests

Of Liberty have all her altars lit.

The Psalm of Liberty is chanting now.

Haste, Brothers, haste !

NOVICE.

It is too late to turn.

We must push onwards now. No help for it !

The vast crowd, swarming all this way, shuts fast
 Each outlet in our rear. Pray, pray be cautious !

ORVAL.

Follow my finger yonder. What is he,

That man, whose form, upon the rolling smoke

Dilated, and by smoky vapors curled
 Laocoön-like, looks risen from out the fire ?
 Red-lit by those infernal flames, his face
 Is as a fallen angel's. And his voice,
 Blown hoarse this way upon the gusty dark,
 Is like a madman's.

NOVICE.

That is Amathusius,
 The inspired Prophet of the Future. Round him
 Behold his priests, — philosophers, and poets,
 Musicians, artists, writers ; — at their feet,
 The new-made votaries, — naked girls and boys.

ORVAL.

Ah ha ! That is your Aristocracy ?
 Now show me him that sent thee.

NOVICE.

Him I see not.

He is not of these.

AMATHUSIUS THE PROPHET.

Daughter of Liberty,
 Arise ! approach ! come to her Prophet's breast !
 Come naked ! come thou free from shame, and free
 From ancient prejudice. Thou, chosen first,
 Free Bride of Free Humanity ! Deep, deep,
 I drink the floated odors of thy hair !
 Sweet, sweet ! I drain the red love of thy lip !
 Daughter of Liberty, upon thy brow
 The goddess seals this consecrating kiss !

A GIRL.

I fly into thine arms ! I pant for thee,
Prophet of Liberty ! I love I burn !

ANOTHER GIRL.

Behold ! I spread mine arms out on the air
reach thee, O Beloved ! I faint — I fall —
ant with passion at thy feet ! I writhe —
grovel at thy throne ! I burn ! I burn !

ORVAL.

The poor wretch is, indeed, in a convulsion.

NOVICE.

O, if you wait, you will see more of them.
This happens every night. But hark !

THE PROPHET.

Behold,

I am transfigured, thrilled, beatified !
Daughter of Liberty, from thine embrace
I gather inspiration. Hearken, all !
I am about to prophesy.

ORVAL.

The girl
Has fallen on the flint, now, in a fit.
Abominable profanation !

NOVICE.

Hist !

THE PROPHET.

Lo now ! we twain, my delicate white witch,
We are the breathing symbols of a world
Ennobled, and regenerated. Mark !
Around us are the ruins everywhere
Of a benighted, but abolished, Past.
Our foot is on the altar and the shrine
Of a deposed Divinity. Rejoice,
All ye to whom, in us, hath been revealed
The bridals of the Better Day ! Rejoice !

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Blesséd thou among women, O bride
And beloved of the Prophet ! Lo, we,
Thy sisters, exult in the pride
Of ourselves consecrated in thee !

THE PROPHET.

Hark ! I proclaim a new world ! a new God !
The People's God : the God of Happiness,
Pleasure, and Plenty ! The old God of Sorrow
Sinks, with the ruins of a world of tears,
Smit by the Light of Reason, to the abyss !
Blood must wash out the traces of past pain,
And we will dig the earth with graves to hold
The griefs that have been walking to and fro
Upon her surface till they grew too many.
Those that would save the altars of the Past
Shall perish on them. I have prophesied.

CHORUS OF MEN.

Destroyed are the temples of Pride and Oppression !
And unmortised the hands from the bodies of
those

Who built them of old. We have offered Priests'
flesh on
Each fane whence the Priest hath blessed Lib-
erty's foes.

ORVAL.

Mine eagle! O mine eagle! yet fulfil
Thine auguries of old! Mine Eagle, rise!
And of the bones of all these murderers
I will rebuild anew the Church of Christ!

A MULTITUDE OF VOICES.

Liberty, Liberty, and Happiness!
Pleasure, and Love! Hourrah! hourrah!

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

Where now
Are the Kings, and the Princes, and Priests,
With their mitres, and sceptres, and ermine,
Who preyed on the People like beasts?

CHORUS OF ASSASSINS.

We have made a clear house of the vermin!

FIRST ASSASSIN.

I slew the first king!

SECOND ASSASSIN.

I the second!

THIRD ASSASSIN.

I

The third!

THE PROPHET.

Be ye exalted, in the day
Of exaltation, men of the red hand !
For ye among the chosen have been chosen,
And ye among the saints are sainted most !

CHORUS OF ASSASSINS.

Through midnight, a midnight band,
Do we walk the troubled land,
With the knife hid in the hand.

THE PROPHET.

Daughter of Liberty, awake ! arise !
Sleepest thou, Daughter ? Sleep no more, — no
more !

[The Thunder bursts overhead.]

Hark ! The free elements, the everlasting
Sublime Destroyers, call to us ! . . . to us,
The Children of Destruction ! we that are
As thunder and as lightning searching earth
To desolate, and purify with fire !
The Ignorance of Nations hath ascribed
To our free kindred of the skies, till now,
Copartnership with human Slavery :
And, in the various fablings of mankind,
The thunder ever was the slave of Power.
First, antique Kronos, then Olympian Zeus,
And last, the Christian's Triple Tyrant, claimed
Dominion of the desolating bolt.
Yet is it, rather, Nature in revolt
That frets her old confine, and utters forth
These revolutionary voices, dashed

From the deep heart of discontent, — and streaks
The sky with fiery protest !

Wake ! Arise !

O, if the thunders ever served the gods,
Then serve they, now, that New Divinity
Whose ministers we are ! But they are free
Of the free heaven, — as we of the free earth.
For there is no more God in Heaven, — and soon
On earth there will be no more worshippers !

ORVAL.

There was a time, — if I had heard this noise
In heaven, I would have held it for a sign,
And cried God wakes ! Beware !

But thou, O God,

Hast thou, thyself, in thine eternal toil
At setting things to rights, which presently
Go wrong again, — hast thou, too, lived to feel
What to thy creature is the last result
Of thy grand gift of life, — this weary longing
For utter self-forgetfulness ?

Alas !

Through every hideous mask of yon mad dance
Still must I recognize the mocking eyes
Of mine own hopes ? — those phantoms of my youth
That, in life's unattainable distance seen,
Once seemed so fair, — changed, by what wicked
spell,

To gross and foul realities ; which yet,
Even in their basest degradation, keep
(Like fallen and degenerate Spirits, transformed
Into the mimics of their former selves
On that infernal stage where imps of Hell

Are apes of Heaven) strange semblance horrible
Of their original beauty!

Fearful Shape,
Whose maniac mouth with bloody spume is smeared,
And round whose lurid robe is LICENSE writ, —
Fell Antic, marshalling this monstrous Masque!
Art thou not she that, clad in glorious beams,
Fair as the Future, solemn as the Past,
And far as both from life's dull Present, once
Stood o'er me, murmuring, "I am LIBERTY" ?
And thou, grim Giant with the gory club
And brutish brow, methinks through all disguise
I know thy face, though fairer face was thine
When first I hailed and named thee BROTHERHOOD,
And with rash voice invoked thee from afar,
Whom, being come, I loathe! O, Circe's wand
Is on us here! and noble Spirits, that sailed
Bold over perilous seas to win life's prize,
From heroes turned to hogs and wolves, with howl
And grunt proclaim the moral of their lives
Whom love of beauty lured, from their safe home
In happy human carelessness of life's
Eternal incompleteness, to pursue
Impossible Ideals. We are fooled
By time, and plagued with granted prayers. Hence-
forth

Let man, whose realm is in the Actual, leave
To the great God, what, by the greedy grasp
Of his impatient passion, man destroys, —
The Ideal Beauty! I am sick of hope.

[The storm increases.]

What? you untutored Spirits of the Storm,
Have ye learned nothing from your past defeats?
To-morrow, will you be fast chained again:

To-morrow, the old forces, the old forms,
 The old legitimate authorities
 That keep things in their places, will come back,
 And, laughing, look you out of countenance !
 Then must you be humiliated much
 By smiling heavens, mocked by little breezes,
 And baffled by a sunbeam ! Wretched rebels,
 Roll on ! you can get nothing by this noise.
 I, too, know these hysterics. Be at peace !

THE PROPHET.

Daughter of Liberty, come forth ! Descend !
 Now must we march once more our midnight rounds,
 To institute Destruction in the House
 Of this Old God that by the People's voice
 Hath been deposed. Forth ! forth ! Awake, I say !

THE GIRL (*awaking*).

For thee ! . . . for thee . . . and all mankind . . .
 I burn
 With love . . . with love !

ORVAL.

Who is the giant yonder
 That bars their progress, with his brawny bulk ?
 A mere youth, yet a giant ! Mark him now.
 He is speaking with your Prophet.

NOVICE.

Hell and devils !
 By all that 's desperate, 't is he !

ORVAL.

'T is who ?

NOVICE.

The Modern Brutus. And they come this way.
We are both dead men !

ORVAL.

Thou poor poltroon ! hide here
Under my cloak . . . But, if thou shakest thus,
I'll strangle thee !

NOVICE.

For mercy's sake, away !

ORVAL.

No ! I will see this farce out to the end.
What are those women, dancing in the ruins,
Among the smouldering embers, robed like queens ?

NOVICE.

Those yonder ? They are Countesses, Princesses,
Great ladies that have left their wedded lords,
And have embraced the New Religion, here.

ORVAL.

Methinks I could weep now, if this were not
The very scorn of scorn ! O women ! women,
Whom we have loved, and honored, ay ! and
served, —
Loved with the loyal heart of honest man,
That fears no falsehood where he trusts all truth !
Honored on knightly knee, with tender homage,
Half deified with holy poesies,
And held unsullied in the secretest shrine

Of things divine within us ! . . . Served, ah God !
 Served with the soldier's sword, the poet's pen,
 And all the thousand nameless services
 Of silent adoration, that make strong
 The better portion of men's days and deeds !
 Were ye not mothers, daughters, sisters, wives ?
Our mothers, and *our* daughters, and *our* sisters ?
 And we almost have worshipped you as angels !
 Why then, . . . why then, God bless my Grand-
 mother !
 For we will yet be merry.

NOVICE.

 They are firing
 The chancel yonder !

ORVAL.

 What, then, do we fight for ?
 Homes without love, hearths without honor left !
 Veronica, thy pure soul is in Heaven.
 I am glad of it !

A VOICE FROM BENEATH.

 Now for an epitaph,
 Pious, pathetic, but yet not too long !

ORVAL.

Peace, mocker ! or speak only to my *mind*.
 My *heart* thou knowest not.

NOVICE.

 They pour this way !
 We are dead men. Curse this aristocrat,
 For he will be the death of me !

THE PROPHET (*advancing, and to Orval*).

How, Brother ?

What art thou, that dost look thus sad and haughty ?

Why art thou not, here, in the midst of us ?

NOVICE.

Lost ! lost !

ORVAL.

I am of the Destroyers also.

PROPHET.

Whence ?

ORVAL.

From a distant Brotherhood, new come.

I saw your fires far off, and followed them.

THE MODERN BRUTUS.

Who is thy fellow ? wherefore doth he hide

His head, thus, in thy cloak ?

ORVAL.

My younger brother.

A vow is on him, not to show his face

Till he hath murdered — at the least, a Baron.

PROPHET.

And whom hast *thou* slain, Brother ?

ORVAL.

I was sworn,

Only upon the eve of my departure

From Spain, a member of the Spanish Club.

MODERN BRUTUS.

For whom, then, hast thou destined the first blow
Of thy yet unslaked steel and virgin hand ?

ORVAL.

For thee ! . . . if thou betrayest us.

MODERN BRUTUS.

Good ! good !

Here, Brother, take my dagger.

ORVAL.

Brother, mine

Will serve the purpose.

CHORUS OF ASSASSINS.

Live the Modern Brutus !

Live the Assassin of the Spanish Club !

CHORUS OF POETS.

Little leg to little foot :
And now a little body to 't :
Little face to little feature :
We have made a little creature.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Next a little claw, to fight with,
And a little tooth, to bite with,
And a little paunch to fit.
Who knows what may come of it ?

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Though the limbs be small and pliant,
They may grow, and make a giant.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Give it, now, a little tongue ;
And a little word to utter.
It will talk when it grows strong.
Hark ! the lips begin to mutter.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Though the voice be faint and weak,
Earth shall shake when it can speak.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Make it little wings, to fly
Over earth and over sky ;
Wings shall sprout on either shoulder :
It shall soar when it grows older.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Wings of butterfly just now :
Wings of eagle soon will grow.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Choose we now a little name
To call the little creature by,
And be sure 't is still the same
When it waxes stout and high.

CHORUS.

Nay ! no name yet. Let it be
Naked, nameless, winged, and free
As the Son of Cytherea
When to Psyche's couch came he :
Felt, not seen, — a young Idea !

VOICES IN THE DISTANCE.

Away ! the breeze that 's in the trees
Hath warned us not to stay.
The dark grows thin. The birds begin.
The dawn 's at hand. Away !

NOVICE.

The night is ending.

DISTANT VOICES.

To the East ! the East !

NOVICE.

The forest will be emptied in an hour.

ORVAL.

But who come yonder ?

NOVICE.

We shall presently
Distinguish their appearance. They approach us.

CHORUS OF PHILOSOPHERS.

From its helpless infancy
In the film-eyed ages, we
Have weaned the Human Race, my friend :
Nurst the bantling on the knee
Of divine Philosophy ;
Taught the child its A, B, C.
And given it a name and a place, my friend.
Now the course o' the world is free,
And we are the first in the race, my friend !

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Like a long-delayed sunrise
That all at length, and all at once,
Leaps among the cloven chasms
Of the Dawn, in sudden spasms
Of inextinguishable laughter,
Till all the wonder overruns
The riven East with red surprise,
And every cloud that roofed the skies
Burns like a blazing rafter,

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Even so, though sunken long
In gulfs of darkness, down among
The old benighted centuries,
To our invocation wakes
The Light of Truth with a heart of fire,
Eagle plumes and sanguine eyes;
And with a sudden splendor takes
Earth and skies, to so comprise
A whole world's long desire!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Like a trumpet sounding on
Men to die at Marathon,
Like the clash of sword on shield,
Triumphing the trampled field,
Clashed on purple plains Platæan,
Hark! from hill to hill, the pæan
Of the People's Liberty!
Comrade of the conquering cause,
Whom the gust of combat draws
Out of darkened lands, on high

Lo ! the light of larger laws
Flooding all Futurity !

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Pilgrim from the land of night,
Superstition's home for ages,
Thou, lured hither by the light
Poured by us upon the pages
Of the ancient Book of Life,
Thou shalt open with a knife
What was sealéd from the sight
Of the schools and of the sages.

DISTANT VOICES.

Hark, hark ! the watchdogs bark !
The east is growing gray.
The red cock is crowing, hark !
Comrades, come away !

AN ASSASSIN.

Hail to thee, comrade ! hark ! . . . I drink thy
health
In this old skull of an old Saint. Good night !
[He throws the skull to Orval, and passes.]

CHORUS OF ASSASSINS.

The arrow flieth in the noon.
The sickness walks below the moon,
And so walk we.

SEMI-CHORUS,

Brother, follow ! through the hollow
Night thy comrades call to thee !

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Hist ! hist ! The moon 's in a mist.
There is a ghost walking over the lea.
Well I wist what he hides in his fist,
For he mutters and talks
To himself as he walks,
But he doth not wish that the world should see.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Over wood and over water,
Hark ! I hear the howlet's daughter
(He hath daughters three !)
Call her sisters, " Come and slaughter
The rats in the hollow tree.
We may do as we list, for the moon 's in a mist,
And nobody now can see."

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

When the night had killed the day,
I did hear the lion say
To the leopard . . . " Come away,
Brother leopard ! here is prey."

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

I have seen the Destroyer, — the Angel
That beareth the final evangel,
Descending with blood on his wings,
To purchase of priests and of kings
The earth for a burial-ground,
To bury the Old Dead God.
He surveyed it, and measured it round
And across with his measuring-rod.

CHORUS.

As the dog-fish through the dark
Of his dismal world doth sail,
Never swerving from his mark,
Where he tracketh a sick whale;
Even so, do we go
Up and down, and to and fro
By a road without a name,
With a meaning and an aim,
And a hate that shall not fail.
Following still, and still pursuing,
Over regions red with ruin,
Evermore some kings undoing,
Speed we on our trail!

DISTANT VOICES.

The wan stars sink beneath the brink
Where the cold-tided day
Whitens night's shore, and still flows o'er
Faint, but how fast! Away!

FIRST DANCING GIRL.

Kill for me, Brother, Prince Lois!

SECOND DANCING GIRL.

And kill for me, Brother, Duke John!

FIRST DANCING GIRL.

Go to, thou, with thy noise!
Let the old one be first made away with!

DANCING CHILDREN.

Goodman knave ! we have broken our toys.
 Bring us the head of a noble to play with,
 Or the crown of a king . . . what fun !

CHORUS OF ARTISTS.

Here 's a new temple to build, my friend,
 The People's new Faith, — to enshrine it :
 And we, the men of the modern guild, my friend,
 We are the folks to design it.

FIRST ARTIST.

Gothic is out of date.

SECOND ARTIST.

And nobody cares for Byzantine.

CHORUS.

No ! Let it be something great,
 Stately, and elephantine !
 Builded strong shall be every column,
 Of twelve dead kings in a circle solemn :
 And the capitals shall be bossy and full,
 Each boss made out of a noble's skull.
 And the gory locks shall drip evermore
 Rare tracery red of the richest gore !
 Art is immortal, — 't is true, my friend !
 But meanwhile, sometimes her servants starve.
 Now we have found something new, my friend,
 Better than marble to cut and carve.

[They pass.]

DISTANT VOICES.

The night is passing : the dawn is at hand.
Hasten away, o'er the wasted land !

NOVICE.

Away, my lord, away ! the ground is clear.
We may escape unnoticed.

ORVAL.

Silence, cur !
Once more, once more ere I depart, once more
Seek, O my soul, to compass palpably,
And set before thee in a single shape,
Distinct to thought, the whole circumference
Of this infernal chaos, which some fiend
Frees roaring from the riven womb of Time
To overwhelm creation !

What hath made
This brute beast tame hath made me fierce. 'T is
well !

O I had need enough of this strong wine,
To wake the drowsy heart that in me dwells,
And sting my spirit back to life again ;
For, by the mass ! it is a weary world,
And I am sick of watching it ! so sick,
I would be well content to sleep it out, —
Even as God doth ! But I thank thee, Scorn,
For thou hast made me man ! Come, Horror ! come,
And harrow all my heart ! Come, bitter Rage,
And wring me to the nerve, that I may roar
Defiance, till I crack the sleepy doors
Of Heaven's indifferent Justice, and break up
This maddening silence ! Resolution come,

Though from the midriff of Despair, and mail
 My manhood up in iron purposes !
 O for one echo of the Fiat, heard
 In Heaven, what time the Sons of Morning sang
 To see the cosmic beauty of a world
 Forth issuing from the formless infinite !
 He that should ever hear within himself
 That word of God re-echoed from the Past,
 And save thereof one syllable of Power
 To re-create creation . . . soul of mine,
 That man would be . . .

VOICE FROM BELOW.

A little God-Almighty !

ORVAL.

Who spoke then ?

NOVICE.

Nay, not I. Let us away.

ORVAL.

Well ! if it be not mine, — the nobler part,
 To heal and to regenerate, — be it mine,
 What yet remains, — to crush, and to subdue !
 Ay ! when the lion dies, why let the bees
 Build houses and make honey in his carcass.
 The lion lives, though ; and his heart in me
 Is beating yet ! O, swift, mine eagle, swift
 And fierce thy flight be !

NOVICE.

Dawn is breaking yonder.
 And I shall die of ague in these dews.

ORVAL.

Let us descend, then. Put me on my way,
And I will free thee, when we reach the valley.

NOVICE.

Where wilt thou drag me, through this boiling mist?
Halt! I can go no farther.

ORVAL.

March! Down there
The torch-fires dwindle in the vaporous dells:
The cries and songs of last mad night's mad revel
Faint off along the forest.

*[The dawn becomes faintly visible. A pale light creeps
over the scene, and the mists begin to rise and move.]*

Dost thou mark
Upon yon white and rolling vapors borne
Among the haggard forest-trees, whence yet
The night-dews drip, pale shadows passing by?
Hear'st thou no moan upon the morning air?

NOVICE.

I see not anything but the raw mists:
Hear nothing but the tumbling stone that falls
From precipice to precipice beneath us.
Come! or we shall be foundered in the fog!

SPIRITS PASSING IN THE MIST.

Mourn for the Dead Christ, mourn!
Where have they buried our Lord?
In the heart of the mad world's scorn?

ORVAL.

Ah God, for my horse, and my sword !
I will hew Thee a cross out of every tree,
To crucify them that have crucified Thee !

THE SPIRITS (*passing*).

By the shrines, among the tombs,
Was our blissful twilight dwelling.
Through the glories and the glooms,
Did our bosoms bear the swelling
Silver psalm, and the sonorous
Anthem's solemn-chanted chorus,
And the organ's deep Amen,
From the golden pipes out-welling
Music to the hearts of men.
Whither shall we seek new dwelling,
Sisters ?

SPIRITS OF THE BELLS.

Ah, there is no telling !
All the world is changed since then.
From the swallow-swarméd steeple,
From our homes in happy bells,
To the hearts of faithful people
Over fields, and floods, and fells,
Did our white wings, music-haunted,
Bear sweet invocations, chanted
By the silver Sabbath chimes ;
And in lonely forests daunted
Savage creatures from their crimes.
Now our homes are ruined wholly :
Now our haunts are no more holy :
And we wander, sadly, slowly,
Tenants of the troubled times.

SPIRITS OF THE CASEMENTS.

We, that lived among the gleaming
 Garments of the sworded Saints,
 In a rose and amber glory ;
 We, that sailed the purple-streaming
 Pageant, which the sunset paints
 With a martyr's mighty story
 On the calm Cathedral floor,
 Underneath the flaming casement,
 When the day is downward stealing : —

SPIRITS OF THE DOME.

We, that hung and hovered o'er
 Angels smiling sweet amazement
 From the golden-misted ceiling,
 In the glowing dome above ; —

SPIRITS OF THE AISLES.

We, that shifted soft surprises
 Of still light, where sinks or rises,
 Through the palely pillared grove
 Shade of morning or of even ; —

CHORAL SPIRITS.

Now upon the winds of heaven
 Lurid-lighted with red levin,
 Hither, hither, dimly driven,
 Down the darkness do we move.

[*The sun rises.*]

ORVAL.

Ah, the sun rises ! in whose golden beam
 Their forms are melted from my sight. And now
 They fade away across the pine-tree tops !

NOVICE.

There is the valley. Yonder lies your road.

ORVAL.

O blessed dawn of day! O blowing breeze
Of the fresh morning! hail, thrice hail to ye!
Now JESU, AND MY SWORD!

Here fellow, take
The symbol and the thing together. Keep them.
Thou hast earned both.

[*Throws a purse, with the Cap of Liberty, to the Novice.*]

NOVICE.

I have your Lordship's word
Pledged to his safety, who shall visit you
To-night. But

ORVAL.

Tush! away! We gentlemen
Break not our promise JESU, AND MY SWORD!

VOICES (*answering from the valley*).

MARIA, AND OUR SWORDS! Long live our lord!

ORVAL.

Fare thee well, Citizen! Thou to thine own,
And mine to me. I do not envy, sir,
The knave that owns you.

Jesu, and Maria!
Jesu Maria, and our swords!

Friend, welcome!
[*He descends the valley.*]

SCENE V.—*Early morning. Valley and Woodland in the domain of Orval.*

ORVAL.

Through the deep quietness of these old woods
I walk unwelcomed. The offended flowers
Look on me, like the faces of lost friends.
Yet there is nothing I have won from life,
Nor anything I yet may hope to win,
That's worth to me what in the winning it
I have flung away, — the friendship of such things!

THE VOICE OF MURIEL (*singing from the heart of the wood*).

The ivy hangs and the violet blows
Above and beneath in the bright June weather.
I breathe the breath of the bramble rose,
And I and the sweet birds sing together.

ORVAL.

O all that's left of my lost youth! How like
The music of the dirge of my dead heart
Sounds thy glad matin song to these sad ears!

THE VOICE OF MURIEL (*singing*).

Sing, happy bird, and rebuke the world
For its foolish cares and its empty deeds,
And its gods of clay and of gold, whose curled
Hot incense Tophet with darkness feeds.

ORVAL.

Blind! and I pitied, who now envy him!

THE VOICE OF MURIEL.

Mine eyes are shut; but my heart is not.

And my spirit *feels* what your eyes *see* merely, —
The mighty mirth of our mother Earth,

When the glory of God on her face shines
clearly.

ORVAL.

Poor flower, thou know'st not thou art perishing!
O you inexorable unjust Powers
That mock us with your seeming leave to choose
The paths on which you thrust us headlong, why,
Why have you ever whirled my life away
From all love's holding-places?

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL (*above*).

Foolish child!

Chide not the nursing hand that stole away,
To save for Love, the toys Love else had broken.

ORVAL.

What hath Love been to me? The Impossible.
And still forever, The Impossible!
What was it that my vain youth loved? a dream,
A phantom, ever beckoning me away
To deserts, where it left me lone

THE VOICE.

The Past.

ORVAL.

And now, life's journey wellnigh o'er; when, tired,
I can scarce further fare, and fain would rest,

What 's left for love to linger on ? a child :
A life forever beyond mine

THE VOICE.

The Future.

ORVAL.

What, then, am I ?

THE VOICE.

The Present.

ORVAL.

Mystic Voice,
That dost mine inmost questionings answer thus,
Yet further answer, What art thou ?

THE VOICE.

The hour,
Orval, is not far off when thou shalt know.

SCENE VI. — *Night. The Tent of Panurge.*

PANURGE.

Wait me by the witch elm. And if thou hear
A pistol-shot, fired from the Castle, bring
Thy fellows to the rescue. Otherwise
Wait me till dawn.

MODERN BRUTUS.

O head of all our hopes !
Once more I do conjure thee

PANURGE.

Tush !

BRUTUS.

Yet think —

'T is an aristocrat — the worst of all,
 And the most desperate. Thou goest alone.
 He, in the centre of his strength, is armed.

PANURGE.

Go to ! Go to ! This Old Nobility
 Breaks not its word of honor.

BRUTUS.

But

PANURGE.

The Prince

Of Darkness hath his commendable points,
 His courtesies, and his punctilios.
 We all must trust the Devil himself sometimes.
 Farewell till dawn. Ho ! lights without there !
 Watch.

[Exit.

SCENE VII. — *Night. Manorial Hall in the Castle of Orval. Arms, blazons, and family portraits along the walls. In the foreground a marble table lighted by a brazen lamp. On the table a chart outspread, and beside the chart a sword and pistols, richly jewelled. In the background a smaller table, carved and gilded ; the coverlet splendidly embroidered. Thereon a silver wine-flagon and goblets. One side of the scene is closed by a carved screenwork, through which is the entrance*

to the hall, an open archway hung with tapestried curtains. On the other side a vast hearth, surmounted by an antique clock. ORVAL is seated at the table studying the chart. He looks up as the hand of the dial points to midnight.

ORVAL.

Midnight! It was, methinks, at this same hour,
 Upon the eve of battle and of death,
 That the last Brutus, if the tale be true,
 Beheld his Evil Genius. I await
 A like encounter, haply a like fate;
 Who, ere that unreturning traveller, Time,
 Add to lost hours this night's now neighbored noon,
 Here in my fathers' hall must, face to face,
 Behold a being of no fathers born;
 A man without a birthplace or a name;
 An apparition from the immense abyss
 Of nothingness arisen (who knows?) to be
 Perchance the father of an age not mine;
 If I, lone champion of the kingly past,
 Whose ghostly armies are the dead and gone,
 Whose battle-cry is a world's epitaph,
 Now fail to hurl this human portent back
 Into the blackness of the bottomless pit,
 From whence it issues. I? Ay, there's the point
 Where stealthy thought creeps in to steal the heart
 Of hardest enterprise. What is my blood
 To consecrate? Or is it yet so well
 Worth saving from the slough wherein it sinks,
 This marrowless and miserable frame
 Of things, that styles itself Society?
 The unkingly tenancy of kingly thrones,
 The coalesced and concrete egotisms

Of Class, the unintelligence of Power,
The Church's great uncharity, and all
The organized hypocrisy of things !
Can man's wit cheat, against such desperate odds,
Nature's remorseless wisdom ? Am I not ,
Leading a self-surrendered host to fight
For an already-abdicated cause ?
It may be. I devote myself to death
For that which haply cannot live. So be it !
Why, this is as I will. This is my strength,
This the respect that saves my self-respect.
For what I do, I do because I must,
With manly made-up mind, foursquare to fate,
Possessing perfectly what is mine own,
The deed ; and careless of what is not mine,
Fate's dealing with it after it is done.
To calculate the gain or loss of it,
That would spoil all. What 's failure ? or success ?
Nothing. They have no value in themselves.
They are base counters. What gives worth to them
Is just the so much of a man's own self
As he can stake upon them. Any man
May be a martyr to whatever cause
Can pay the price of martyrs' crowns. But he
That 's martyr to his faith in martyrdom,
And gives himself to death, because he deems
To die for any cause is, in itself,
A nobler thing than any cause men die for ;
That man hath surely won the perfect palm,
And I will win it ! Were it possible
To contemplate success as being made
The measure of the value of the act
And its prescribed repayment, I might pause.
For who that champions any human hope

Through life's inhuman battle could accept,
 Here in the witness of Eternal God,
 Unscared, the dread responsibility
 Of being answerable for success ?
 But loyalty to failure is at least
 Absolved from shame, whatever be the event.
 Souls of my dead forefathers, me, an armed
 Lone watcher by your knightly tombs, inspire
 With that undaunted scorn of doubt that once
 I' the wondrous ages whence, with duteous rites,
 My spirit invokes ye, did inspire yourselves
 To those high deeds whereof I am the heir !
 Last of the lion-hearts whose lordly life
 Once filled those hollow images of men
 With helméd heads from yonder wall down bent
 Above my own, — sole guardian of the hearth
 Which your renown makes honorable yet,
 Sole resolute remnant of your race and mine,
 Fallen upon times that are not ours, — behold
 In me whatever now remains on earth
 To represent your virtues and your faults !
 Be nigh me now ! I am prepared. *[Clock strikes.]*

MASTER ANDREW (*entering*).

My lord,
 The man that was expected is arrived.

ORVAL.

Admit him.

PANURGE (*entering*).

Give good even to your lordship !
[Exit Master Andrew.]

'Faith, I am ill at ceremonious turns
Of language, — phrases, titles !

*[Throws down his cap and mantle ; and, gazing round
him, eyes impatiently the arms and portraits on the
walls.]*

ORVAL.

Sir, be seated !

I thank you for the faith you have reposed
In the reputed honor of this roof ;
And thus, after the fashion of my fathers,
I pledge my guest.

*[Goes to the table in the background ; pours wine ; and
offers a goblet to Panurge.]*

PANURGE *(taking the goblet mechanically ; his eye still
fixed on the armorial bearings, &c.)*.

Humph ! ha ! . . . If I mistake not,
Yon daub of red and blue along the wall
Is, in the language of the dead and buried,
Called an escutcheon. 'T is a kind of painting
Will soon be out of fashion.

ORVAL.

Sir, all fashions
That go come back again. What seems the newest
Is but the oldest, which, when it returns,
Is least remembered : God having been pleased
To economize the invention of mankind.

PANURGE.

There spoke the son o' the Old Nobility !
I know the man . . . opinionated, proud,
Arrogant, supercilious, nice in speech,

Reckless in deed, self-confident ; whose thoughts
 Are brazen gods the braggart Vanity,
 That makes them, worships ; and the man himself,
 Her proselyte, prays to them nevermore
 Than when no soldier in the field, no coin
 Is left him in the coffer. Desperate men
 Are ever frantic in their trust in God,
 Not finding in themselves what can be trusted.
 Their fears are fathers to their faiths.

ORVAL.

All force

Begins in fear ; else fear were purposeless :
 The force of forethrift in the fear of want,
 The force of honor in the fear of shame.
 But who fears God of all men least fears man.
 Belief is nourisht at the mother breast
 Of Providence : the beggar Unbelief
 Lives on the alms of Fortune.

PANURGE.

Show me, then,

But so much only as the nether spark
 Of that fire-barbed bolt which is to fall,
 Blasting the rabble and republican heads
 Of our stark-naked unbelieving host ;
 Or but a feather of the wings of one
 Of all those harnessed angels that are pledged,
 Upon the invocation of your priests,
 To smite our revolutionary ranks,
 And raise the siege about your harassed halls.
 Bid the bolt fall, or bid the angel smite :
 And if, by fast or prayer, cross signed, hymn sung,
 Or any other pious conjuring,

Thou canst compel them to perform the task
Assigned them by the priesthood of thy faith,
Be that faith mine, Lord Orval!

ORVAL.

Friend, methinks

Thy humor lacks originality.
So old is Atheism, and so stale
That creed's vocabulary, I confess
That I had hoped speech newer from the man
Of the new epoch.

PANURGE.

Tut! all speech is trash
That takes transmitted value from the man
That speaks it, as from what to speak it moves him
He takes his own. Be what I represent,
Not how I represent it, thy concern.
My creed and its vocabulary both,
If old, are also new, as nature. Cries
Of half a world's intolerable wrong,
The wail of unrequited toil, the moan
Of martyred patience, the tumultuous shout
For knowledge from long-pining Ignorance poured,
The howl of human hunger, and the shriek
Of irrepressible protest, power no more
Can stifle in the angry heart of man, —
Demanding recognition of a race
In prejudice imprisoned, dogged by doubt,
By fear tormented, and by custom bound
To bestial habitudes; . . . all these, light lord,
Are but the broken, scattered utterances
Of that indignant Truth whose creed I preach,
Whose hand I arm, and whose retributive

Dominion trumpet-tongued I have proclaimed
Above the annihilation of thine own !
This is the faith of millions that in me
Hath found a voice. As for myself, the sole
Divinity that I acknowledge now
Is the all-procreant intellect that rules
This restless brain ; whose power, whate'er it be,
Suffices to give meat to starving mouths,
And hope to stricken hearts. Canst thou aver
The God thou worshippest hath ever been
As helpful to his worshippers ?

ORVAL.

The God
My sires before me worshipt, with the faith
Which they bequeathed unspotted to their son,
I worship still. And He, that gave to them
Power and glory in their days of pride,
To me hath given, in mine hour of trial,
Patience to bear, and courage to withstand.

PANURGE.

Nay, then, but I will swear thee, by the book
Of thy good deeds, thou dost a devil serve.
Leave we, however, these absurd disputes
Unto the theologians : if, in truth,
There be yet theologians to dispute them.
To business, noble sir !

ORVAL.

Speak. I am dumb
To learn the cause and object of this most
Unsought and unintelligible honor.
Citizen God, I wait thine oracle.

PANURGE (*musingly*).

Ay. Wherefore am I here . . . thou askest.

ORVAL.

I?

Nay, sir, I did not question you.

PANURGE.

Proud host,
 I question then myself: and to myself
 Make answer: first, because I wisht to know thee
 As man may know man, and to judge of thee
 As man may judge of man.

ORVAL.

Licet videre
Virgilium . . . an interest, Virgil shared,
 Doubtless, with each Numidian lion last
 Arrived in Rome . . .

PANURGE.

In the next place, because
 I wisht to save thee (do not frown, Lord Orval!)
 As man would save man, if he could.

ORVAL.

Save me?
 For thy first wish I thank thee. For the second
 My thanks I needs must keep, sir, for my God,
 And my good sword.

PANURGE.

Thy sword? thy God? words, names,
 Nothings! But hearken. Multitudes of mouths

Shriek for thy blood. Strong hands, gaunt arms,
are stretcht

To seize thee. What is thy defence? A few
Handfuls of men, ill armed, ill fed, a few
Handfuls of earth — scant room for tall men's
graves.

Where is thine ordnance? where thy foundries, —
stores

Of siege? thy muniments of war? Where, most
Of all, the valor of thy followers — troops

They are not? Where the manliness in whose
Behalf thou dost thy manhood sacrifice?

Come, come! I talk, my lord, to no blind fool,
No blundering blockhead. Were I in thy place,
I know what it were best that I should do.

ORVAL.

Sir! I am patient.

PANURGE.

Well, then hark! Were I
Lord Orval, I would say to this man here,
This man that had a whim — a trick o' the heart,
A start of nature — call it what you will —
To so think of me, that he came by night
Out of my foeman's camp, companionless,
With no guard but his faith in my good word,
To save my life this man who offers me,
In the frank name of Friend, a title won
From something nobler than the gewgaws daubed
On yonder garish wall a title, man,
Refused to thousands that revere him, even
As God, and follow him as Destiny, —

Were I the man that you, Lord Orval, seem,
 And you the friend I speak of — I to him
 Would say, “Alliance between thee and me!
 Mine army I disband, my lordship keep,
 Lands, manors, seignories, and titles all,
 Upon the faith of his full-plighted word,
 Who fearless trusted to my own his life.”
 Thine age, Lord Orval?

ORVAL.

Whatsoever age
 Hath grace of God to be the least like yours, sir.
 Inquisitor, what is mine age to thee?

PANURGE.

Methinks, if nothing but the timely frost
 Of life's eventual winter should in thee
 Obstruct the springs of nature, they have yet,
 Ere they shoot o'er the fall, some fifteen years
 Through which to flow. For life in men like thee
 Flows fast, and soon flows out. Thou shouldst
 be young.

On that pale face passion, not time, hath preyed,
 And thy frame, firmly masoned in the form
 Of noblest manhood, might defy decay
 For yet another half of human life
 Stretcht to the longest, if the life that frets
 Its fiery channels through those violent veins
 Were of more sluggish element.

[*He muses.*

So be it!

Be one gap golden in the iron rule
 Of the inexorable Necessity,

One head exempted from the curse of all !
 What harm in that ? No ! live, Lord Orval ! live
 The last of all the nobles of this land !
 Keep thy broad fields and thine ancestral halls,
 Thy bright excepted title keep. To us
 Surrender but the drivellers, dotards, dolts
 Of that doomed class thou canst not save. Stand off,
 Or at *my* side stand safe. Leave room and way
 For the armed Justice of the Revolution,
 Whose victims, they : whose pontiffs I and thou,
 Co-Cæsars, partners in the purple robe
 Of more than Roman power. To thee I pour
 This first libation !

[*Drinks.*

ORVAL.

Grant me patience, Heaven !
 Sir, I have listened. Are we at the end ?
 Each word that, in the pictured presences
 Of my dead fathers, you have dared to speak
 To me their son, has been an insult. Well,
 I have listened. Have you more to add ? But no,
 By Heaven, Citizen General, forbear !
 Patience is human, and must end at last.
 Inflict no more upon my knowledge that
 You stand here safe, sir, in my knightly word,
 And under the asylum of my roof.

PANURGE.

Thy roof ! thy word ! O Pride, thou hast many
 names !
 What ? with the old and tattered rags long dropt
 From the broad banner of Humanity,
 Think'st thou to patch and purfle and trick out

The naked Vanity that still goes bare?
 Tinsel! still tinsel! and still shame behind!
 Man, man, there's life in that fast-swelling vein,
 Warm life in that flusht brow and flashing eye.
 And yet I tell thee all this vigorous life
 Thou hast coupled to a corpse. Go to! To me
 Names are but nothings. Dost' thou think I wince?
 No, for thou canst not look me in the face
 And swear, by the oath of a gentleman, that thou
 And thine deserve not death: and, after death, —
 Oblivion!

ORVAL.

Ha! And thou and thine, what else
 Have ye deserved?

PANURGE.

Life! Victory! Hearken why.
 There's but one law of things immutable,
 Invincible. 'T is that which doth compel
 The world to pass out of one phase of life
 Into another, and so ever on.
 And by this law already thou and thine
 Have been condemned, as old, weak, overfull,
 To pass away, and so make room for us
 That be young, strong, and hungry. Strive no more
 With fate. *Vae victis!* Yield; for we must have.

ORVAL.

Ah, boaster! sole of mortal men, to thee
 Hath Destiny her hidden mind revealed?
 That thou shouldst menace me with victory?
 Thou man of clay, thou creature of a chance!

Not less than all that are of woman born
Mark for the first ball in the battle-hour,
Or the first stroke of any sabre slasht
At hazard through the cannon's smoky breath!

PANURGE.

Do not deceive thyself, Lord Orval. Me
Fate, my wise mother, head and foot, hath dipt
In the invulnerable lake. Along
The paths I tread Chance walks not. Mortal
foes

I scorn. Nor sword can strike, not bullet pierce
Me that am mailed in Nature's iron, until
My being shall have ceased to be to thine
A dread Necessity. When from my path
Hath perisht all obstruction, wheresoe'er
That path may lead me matters not. My work
Will have been done. But hark! Time mocks
at us.

[Clock strikes.]

Man, I must leave thee to thy fate. One word!
If thou be weary of thine own life, still
Thou hast a son. Save him.

ORVAL.

The safety, sir,
Of that pure soul is in God's keeping. Here,
On earth, the son's place is beside the sire.

[Buries his face in his hands.]

PANURGE.

Ay, meditate! For meditation is
Fit neighbor to the grave.

ORVAL.

Away, wild fool!
 Thou knowest not what passes here, — nor canst!
 Sir, if in your low nature there be depths
 I fathom not, there yet are heights in mine
 You cannot scale. Keep thou thy world. Leave
 mine
 To me.

PANURGE.

My world? I have none. I keep nothing.
 Slave of one thought, and bondsman to one form!
 With every impulse of my will I make,
 And, having made, destroy a hundred worlds.
 Nor can thy fancy image, even in dream,
 My mind's unfrontiered realm.

ORVAL.

Abortion born
 Of Nature in decline! thy boasted sense
 Is barren to conceive what is the strength
 Of those whose noble fixity of faith
 O'er fortune's fleeting sands is founded firm
 Under the present in the solid past.
 Look yonder on the images of those
 Whose life in me is living. Scan their forms,
 Their faces mark! On every noble brow
 The self-same blood is eloquent: the same
 High thought shines clear from every kingly eye.
 That blood in me yet flows, and in my heart
 That thought, the patriarchal heritage
 Of honored lives, is resolute. But thou,
 Man of the day that hath no yesterday,
 Where is thy native land? thy homestead where?

Thy wandering tent is every evening pitcht
Upon the ruins of thy neighbor's hearth,
Thy march is every morn to rapine new.
But home of thine thou hast not, wheresoe'er
Men honor yet the memory of their sires.

PANURGE.

Honor their memory by all means ! Well
Have I been studying all this while, my lord,
The list of your illustrious ancestors.
See if I have not . . . "marked their faces, scanned
Their forms " exactly ! This grave Councillor
Grilled Jews and roasted witches to the taste
Of priestly palates, — the approved head-cook
And caterer to that cannibal, the Church.
Well, I admire the beard of him, and praise
The barber's skill that trimmed it. This one here
Was a King's Chancellor, and had in charge
The Great Seal, and sign manual. They served
him,
Upon occasion, to forge documents,
Falsify acts and deeds, buy judges, rob
The public treasure, and appropriate
The private property of lesser men.
Yonder fine fellow, with the soft black eyes,
White ruffles, and smooth chin, only seduced
The wives and daughters of his friends. But here
Comes next a Patriot who proudly wears
The Golden Fleece, which paid the services
Of his sword's hiring by the Spanish King.
That noble lady in the stainless silks,
With swanlike throat, and stately brow serene,
She was her footman's mistress. This one here,

With such a glory of gold curls, and such
Unstinted revelation of rich charms,
Was a king's concubine. Behold, my lord,
The spotless fountains of your lineage fair
And noble! But the Judgment Day draws nigh.
And O be sure that we ignoble men,
Whose mean task is to ply the rope and axe,
Shall not forget these most illustrious lords,
Nor yet their worthy offspring.

ORVAL.

Slanderer!

Son of our serfs, thou liest in thy throat!
Had not my noble fathers sheltered thine,
Thou hadst not stood before me to blaspheme
Their honest names. And when, from out the herd
Of animal brutes they had for ages been,
Thy base begetters did at last begin
To emerge into humanity, it was
Our fathers that for thine built churches, schools,
And taught them human duties. Wretch! thy
curse,
Shattered, from off their ancient glory falls
As once of old in fragments fell the brand
Of the black Painim from the stainless shield
Of Christendom's pure Knighthood. Thee and
thine,
Do I not know ye? Sir, I have visited
Your rabble camp. I know you all. Your mad
Philosophers, your atheistic priests,
Your consecrated murderers, horrible
And sexless harlots . . . under every mask
Of your abominable devil's dance
Last night, sir, I detected and I scorned

The face of every worn-out villany
 And withered vice of the old world, smeared o'er
 With the coarse barbarous war-paint of the new.
 I heard your new songs, and I recognized
 In all the same old burden, "Blood and gold!"
 "Rapine and wrong!" But you, sir, you yourself
 I saw not. Why? Because you did not deign,
 And rightly did not deign, sir, to descend
 From where the folly of your worshippers
 Above their heads, on your dishonest throne,
 Hath raised you, back to your low native place,
 In the rank filth and ordure at their feet.
 Because you, in your secret soul, despised
 The dupes of your imposture. What remains?
 But if one spark of man yet in thee burns,
 Look on my face, Panurge, — 't is the face
 Of one whom thou canst neither dupe nor daunt,
 And not less thoroughly despise thyself
 Than those whom thou despisest.

[He seats himself under the arms of his Family.]

PANURGE (*musingly*).

True. My world
 Is not yet in the actual developed.
 'T is but the rough sketch of the future time.
 An infant giant . . . must be nurst and taught:
 It grows apace — will grow up in good time
 From cubhood into manhood. It hath need
 Of nourishment — care — and it may be, too,
 No gentle discipline. But mark me, Orval,
 The time shall come when this brute world of mine
 Will thoroughly acquire the consciousness
 Of its existence as a fact in time

Indisputable : when it will cry out,
"I AM!" and then in all the universe
Of Nature shall no other voice be left
To answer, "I am too."

ORVAL.

Well, sir ? and then ?

PANURGE.

And then, Lord Orval, from the life in me
This night incarnate shall a race arise,
Such as the teeming earth has never yet
Reared from her fruitful bosom. Men as gods,
Knowing both good and evil : masters they
Both of themselves and of their home, this globe ;
Which globe itself shall be to them one vast
Palace of Pleasure, by the Spirits of Art
And Science reared into the golden light
Of the glad time, a happy fabric fair
In the wide-porchéd doors of whose serene
Dominion shall the elements of earth
And heaven await the bidding of their lords !

ORVAL.

Thou liest, impostor ! and thy strained voice fails
To hit the pitch of inspiration. Slave
Of Reason, she thou servest hath sealed up
The springs of prophecy and oracle.

PANURGE.

Man, interrupt me not ! Millions of hearts
Have hungered for this prophecy, vouchsafed

To thee alone. I tell thee, in that time,
Mankind shall commune with a god — a god
Unlike to thine — incapable of death —
Wrenched from the bosom of the vast unknown
By the strong toil and trouble infinite
Of centuries of unappeased desire.
From his long hiding-place in heaven at last
Torn down and welcomed to this world of theirs
By his stout human children, in the day
When man shall have attained the age at which
Knowledge of Truth is man's inheritance.
Then shall Humanity both save itself
And save its God.

ORVAL.

Blasphemer, centuries
Have flowed already from the fount of time,
Since when the God, of whom thou feelest now
The inevitable necessity, revealed
Himself to those who, of his earthly sons,
Have eyes to see, or ears to hear. And ere
Thy birth was to the service of his foes
Permitted, by that God Humanity
Hath — even from thee — been saved.

PANURGE.

A brave god! Count
The nigh two thousand years of human pain
And degradation irremediable
Since —

ORVAL.

On the summit of the seven hills,
In the strong heart of sempiternal Rome,

Over the lost dominion of the Cæsars,
 Above the ruined remnants of a power
 More powerful than thine, — girt by fall'n gods
 Nobler than those thou worshippest — fall'n gods
 That dared not lift up from the dust of time
 Their hopeless heads, to gaze upon the feet
 Of their excruciated Conqueror — there,
 Once — in the morning of my life — I saw
 That Cross, and Him that hung thereon, with arms
 Outstretcht to east and west in the embrace
 Of infinite benediction !

PANURGE.

Bah ! the old,
 Old nursery doggerel, the long lullaby
 With which how many periwigged and powdered
 Respectable old women have for years
 Been getting off to sleep that overgrown
 Big baby the Fool-People ! Shake this heap
 Of rusty iron, and methinks 't will sound
 A truer note.

[*Strikes the armor.*]

But thou ? I read thy heart.
 What faith is *there* is of a nobler kind.
 Listen to me, Lord Orval. If thy soul
 Hath ever loved Truth better than all creeds
 That seek to cramp and cannot even clasp her ;
 If thou hast ever followed her fair steps
 Beyond the bounds of Use and Wont — beyond
 The perishable aims that tie small minds
 To small successes ; if thou hast ever felt
 Thyself to be of God created, in
 The image of Humanity, God's Son,

Rather than of blind Chance in the mere form
 Of a three-hundred-years-old Noble ; if
 Thou seest, across the universe of deeds,
 Beyond the few poor earthy inches spanned
 By the brief shadow of thyself, the vast
 Capacities of Nature's wondrous gift,
 A human life ; and, seeing this, dost prize
 The gift, for man's sake — not thine own ; — then
 heed

The voice that now perchance for the last time,
 At the last hour, is speaking. Orval, rise !
 Rise, soul and heart of Nature's nobleman,
 Far nobler in thy manly right *to be*,
 Than in whatever title to the name
 Of meaner men ignoble Custom grants !
 Rise, and consider, for man's sake, with me
 What shall be done to help him.

ORVAL (*in great agitation*).

 Tempter ! Son
 Of the old Serpent ! But no. These are
 dreams.

The first man perished in the wilderness
 Among the brutes : and their lost Paradise
 Men may not now recapture.

PANURGE.

 (Ha ? have I hit
 At last the weak spot in Pride's buckler ! Fool
 Not to have seen this sooner ? He is troubled.
 Have I, by a mere blunder, toucht at last,
 The sensitive nerve of poesy, — the chord
 That sounds in golden unison with hope
 To the man's inmost heart ? *Victoria !*)

ORVAL.

I too have dreamed . . . Ah, if my blood, even yet,
 Could purchase . . . if my head . . . man, you
 should have it!

But no, the days are past. It is too late.

PANURGE.

Listen! We cannot put back time. The dead
 Their dead must bury. Think! A leech forbids
 His patient to take any exercise:
 Warns him that movement may to life be fatal.
 The patient disobeys, and walks a mile.
 What think you of that leech, if, to repair
 The mischief done, he make his patient walk
 The whole mile *back*? The People's sick, my lord,
 Your friends forbade it stir. But it *does* stir:
 Moves forward somehow. And its doctors now,
 Who had forbidden it to move at all,
 Insist upon its moving back again.
 Is motion backward less injurious
 Than motion forward? *

ORVAL.

Grant your simile.

Forward . . . to what?

PANURGE.

Ay, there's the point to which
 I sought to bring this talk. When two wise men
 Discuss dispassionately such a point
 They cannot fail to agree upon it.

* An anachronism of Panurge's. I think that Borne has
 said this, or something like it. O. M.

ORVAL.

Well ?

PANURGE.

I take it there 's no grounded difference
Between, what on the surface seem opposed,
Our real opinions.

ORVAL.

Sir, proceed.

PANURGE.

I will.

The point. What kind of government is best ?
Government by the best.

ORVAL.

But who are they ?

PANURGE.

The real *aristoi* : the most capable
Of governing : the wise men : I and thou.

ORVAL.

And, sir, if you and I be knaves, being wise,
What power is it likely we shall leave
To that most dangerous class — the honest men ?

PANURGE.

If all start fair, the power a man attains
Is proof of his capacity for power.
And never in the history of mankind

Was such a field for power as I have cleared.
Think ! is it nothing to have swept away
Parliament, Church, and Aristocracy ?
All 's even now. And o'er the level waste
What rises but supreme necessity
For the superior mind and stronger hand ?
For men must still be governed.

ORVAL.

You grant that ?

PANURGE.

Of course. And governed by the best, I say.

ORVAL.

So the old obsolete, much-abused device
Of Aristocracy has yet some part
To play in the new system ?

PANURGE.

Yes, renewed
Itself, though, in the person of its new
And better representatives.

ORVAL.

Of course.
But what becomes then of Equality ?

PANURGE.

Think not that I suppose any one man
Is worth as much as any other man.
No fool am I. The wise and noble-minded
Are worth more than the ignorant and base.

Equality means equal start for all ;
Not equal prizes for the swift and slow.
The true great men should get the true great power.

ORVAL.

Yes. But great men, sir, are a kind of fruit
That does not grow on every common tree.
God grants them to us rarely. When they come,
They come to power in their own great way,
Do what we will, by nature's force in them ;
And when they come not, there's no kind of care
Or forcing culture can from sapless stocks
Make such fruits grow. Sir, no philosophy,
If nature makes but little men, can turn
Those little men to great men, — 't is to save
The little men from being slaves and tools
Not to true great men, but untrue great rogues,
Which little men for great men oft mistake,
That the Philosophy of Government
Should be applied. Science ? what need of that,
To know a giant when he strides in view ?
Or move on swiftly, mounted on his back ?
Or trample monsters vanquish't by his club ?
But if the race of giants be extinct,
As travellers tell, till giants grow again,
Let Science help us to make seven-league boots,
And clubs mechanical that, fitly plied,
May in a dwarf's hand deal a giant's blow,
Skill eking out the thrift of force. This Church,
This Parliament, this Aristocracy,
Contrivances which Science had devised
To do the business of society,
You have abolished . . . what ! in the wild wish

That some great man, who has not yet appeared,
Should, when he comes, if he should ever come,
Find round him ample room in which to try
His hand at renovating ruin? Sir,
Call you this prospect progress? You put back
The world, not forward; leaving all to Chance,
The blind, brute-headed, unintelligent god,
Placed on his old barbarian throne again.
Sir, better to my thinking, a bad King,
Checked by a not much better Parliament,
A loose Nobility, and a lazy Church,
Than such an absolute Chaos as you make,
With no more hopeful prospect in reserve
Than ultimate Order in that worst of shapes,
A single-handed Despotism, crowned
And robed i' the name of wronged Democracy.

PANURGE.

Not Despotism, if the canvassed choice
Of the free Many crown the chosen One.

ORVAL.

Whom having crowned, if the free Many then
Should, being human, haply change its mind,
Repent its choice, and wish the chosen One
A chosen Other, shall this most free Many
Be free to uncrown, as 't was free to crown?
Is the free Many free to change as choose?
If so, then where is your stability?
If only free to give, but, having given,
Not free to take again its gift abused,
Where is your liberty?

PANURGE.

We cannot quite
Leave time out of the account. Men must improve
Ere things can be improved. But one wise man,
Wielding the power which many thousand fools
May in a lucky moment be induced
To delegate to him on their behalf,
Can in a year improve things, more than they
Can in a century improve themselves.
I say, Make way for the strong men.

ORVAL.

And I,
Leave room, sir, for the weak. They have God's
leave
To live as well as we. Alas, Panurge,
Do we not strangely seem to have changed parts ?
For you, my Citizen Guest, have all this while
Been speaking for Aristocratic Rights ;
For Popular Privileges, I. 'T is there
The hopelessness, the misery of it all !
Ages, — perchance a hundred years ago —
That might have then been possible, which now
Our fates forbid, and we made common cause
Who now must be no common foes. Too late !
We can no longer understand each other,
Never forgive each other for the past.
The hour hath struck for both : and both must fight,
And one must fall. Nature and time, in strange
Conspiracy, have made us enemies
Beyond all reconciliation. Now farewell,
My Citizen Guest. 'T is time that we should part.
My vassals shall conduct thee to thy friends.

PANURGE.

Farewell, Lord Orval ! Till we meet once more
 On the stormed ramparts. Then, when thou hast
 left
 Nor ball nor powder

ORVAL.

We will *then* cross swords, sir.
 Ho, Herman ! Andrew !

[Enter Andrew and Herman.]

PANURGE.

Madman ! Be it so.
 I am sad. I would have saved thee. Thou and I
 Are eagles of one feather. But the bolt
 Of heaven hath on thine aerie fallen. Behold,
 In yonder purple Oriel, while we speak,
 The sun is rising. To the sun I soar.
 Adieu !

ORVAL.

Adieu, sir ! Andrew, from these halls
 Safe to the outposts of our enemy
 Escort our guest. Adieu.

*[Exit Panurge, escorted by Andrew and Herman. Orval
 remains lost in thought : then with a heavy sigh,*

The spurring hour
 Posts to the bourne. And this fool, life, at last,
 Chasing the future, falls into the past.

END OF THE FOURTH EPOCH.

FIFTH EPOCH.



MAN AND FATE.

SCENE I.—*Early morning. Interior of the fortress-chapel of St. John. Lofty columns, with niches, supporting the nave, on either side. In each niche is an armed statue : and the Senators and chief Ecclesiastical Dignitaries are seated, one under every statue, in their robes of state, to left and right. Behind them, through the spaces between the columns, the rest of the Nobility, armed and in dense masses, is visible. In the background, by the main altar, the Archbishop is seated in a splendid chair, gorgeously clad, and having across his knees an antique sword. Behind and around the altar is grouped the rest of the Priesthood. ORVAL, bareheaded, kneeling before the altar with a banner in his hand. Organ music.*

HYMN.



N the last of thy churches, here,
 Of thy servants the last, do we,
 O God of our fathers, revere
 Thy name ; and we call upon thee.
 For have we not heard with our ears,
 And have not our fathers told
 What was done in the former years,
 The great deeds of the days of old ?
 How the heathen thy hand hath driven,
 When it planted thy people in :
 How the nations thy wrath hath riven,
 When it cast them out in their sin.

In thy name hath the refuge been
Of our sires, in the old generations;
And or ever the hills were seen
Didst thou stablish the world's foundations.
Therefore tremble we not, neither fear,
Though the earth be removed and flee,
And the hills from their place disappear
And be sunk in the midst of the sea.
In thy name have we bended the bow,
In thy name we have girded the sword,
In thy name shall we overthrow,
And scatter our enemies, Lord.
But, O wherefore yet sleepest thou?
And O be thou not absent forever!
Hide, O hide not thy face from us now,
But arise, O Lord, and deliver!

A NOBLE IN THE CROWD.

Mark him! Not Lucifer, ere Heaven he lost,
Could have looked haughtier.

A SECOND.

Nor young Alexander,
When he had conquered what, for all he boasts,
Lord Orval hath not conquered yet, — the world.

A THIRD.

Ay. And what hath he done, this mimic Mars,
To justify the godship he puts on
So proudly?

THE FIRST.

Nothing.

THE SECOND.

For ten foemen fallen
Beneath his sword, a hundred of his own
Have been most rashly wasted.

[*Organ ceases.*]

FIRST.

Hist! the choice
Of this man to the undeserved command
Of us, men noble as himself—nay, nobler,
Is what

SECOND.

Behooves us to prevent.

FIRST.

My thought.

THIRD.

And mine.

ORVAL.

Here on thine altar, Lord of Hosts,
That didst to me, thy faithful soldier, grant
The strength to take it, kneeling, I lay down
This banner, pluckt in battle from thy foes.

ARCHBISHOP.

Servant of God, receive this sacred sword
Which Bouillon's noble Chief in Holy Land
Made famous.

VOICES.

Hail to Orval! Orval, hail!

ARCHBISHOP.

Next, with the benediction of these hands,
And by the general suffrage of thy peers,
Receive of all our armies, and of this
Renowned and ancient citadel, — the last
Whence floats our ensign, — the supreme command :
Whom, in the name of all, I now proclaim
General-in-chief.

VOICES.

Hail, Orval !

A VOICE IN THE CROWD.

I protest.

OMNES.

Silence ! away with him ! Hail, Orval ! hail !

ORVAL.

Friends, Fellow-soldiers, Princes, Senators,
If there be any one among you all
That can against mine honest name advance
Aught to disgrace the choice wherewith you grace it,
Let him stand forth, and look me in the face,
And, like a noble gentleman, lay bare
His purpose and his sword.

[*Silence.*]

ARCHBISHOP.

No voice disputes

Thy well-won title.

OMNES.

Hail, Lord Orval ! hail !

ORVAL.

You do accept me for your leader, then ?

OMNES.

We do ! we do !

ORVAL.

I cannot promise you
That I will lead you all to victory ;
Ask that of God ; but I do pledge myself
To lead you all to glory.

OMNES.

Hail !

ORVAL.

Swear all,
Each on his own good sword, as thus swear I
On noble Godfrey's saintly brand, to Heaven
That hears, and our own hearts, brave gentlemen,
That, long as in our knightly hands be life,
Blood in our veins, or in our bodies breath,
We will not yield up our fair fathers' faith,
The names they won us, or the lands they left ;
So swear to live, and so to die at last,
Dying unshamed, when He that gave us life
His gift recalls, — of hunger, if He will,
Hot thirst, or else what honorable men,
Losing all else save honor's self, may win,
Wounds that grace noble life with noble death ;
Bequeathing, if naught else, their fathers' fame
Fair to our sons, — no heritage of shame !

VOL. II.

23

OMNES.

We swear! we swear!

(The Archbishop raises the cross over the altar, all draw their swords and kneel.)

O Lord our God,
 Smite with thine avenging rod,
 Him that sweareth, if he be
 To his oath forsworn, and thee!
 By the righteous wrath of Heaven
 Perish, — if in heart of craven,
 Head of traitor, soul of spy, —
 Treason, fear, and perjury!

HYMN *(with organ music as the scene closes)*.

The Lord is King; and hath put on
 Glorious apparelling.
 Earth the footstool, Heaven the throne,
 Of the Lord, our God and King!
 Let God arise, and scattered be
 All his enemies! and they
 That hate him shall before him flee,
 As smoke that vanisheth away.
 Lord, we call thee from the deep.
 Hear our cry, consider well!
 Shall he slumber, shall he sleep,
 He that watcheth Israel?

SCENE II. — *Afternoon. Platform on the ramparts.*

VOICES WITHOUT.

Way for the wounded!

(The wounded are carried across the stage. Nobles entering in disorder.)

A COUNT.

Who will surgeon me
This gash? I bleed to death. Chirurgeon ho!
Where's Orval?

A BARON.

Orval? When I saw him last
He was surrounded by our swarming foe,
But fighting still. No lion fiercer.

A PRINCE.

Well,
It was a desperate sortie.

THE COUNT.

Desperate? ay,
They shambled us like sheep.

THE BARON.

All's lost!

ORVAL (*entering, followed by Andrew and vassals*).

Lost? ha!
Who said then, "All is lost"? What man of you,
That in his heart hath manhood left and life,
Dare say, "All's lost"?

THE PRINCE.

What, Orval? nevermore
I thought to see thee amongst living men.
Welcome, brave chief! We bleed at every pore.
What's left of us? How long can we hold out?

ORVAL.

So long as we are living men ; no longer.

THE BARON.

Count, you have seen that cruel man. How say
you,
If we should fall into his bloody hands,
Shall we find mercy ?

ORVAL.

Mercy ? ay, my lord !
Such shameful mercy as the hangman grants
The felon that he gibbets, — a swift end.
Thy father would have scorned such mercy.

THE BARON.

Then nothing's left but to defend ourselves
As best we may. Ah,

ORVAL.

And you, Prince ? What say you ?

THE PRINCE.

My lord, a word with you.

[They walk apart.]

All this is well
To put upon the crowd. But you and I
Know that we must capitulate. My lord,
After this day's disastrous end, to think
We can repulse the enemy is not
Courage, but madness.

ORVAL.

Hush! speak lower, Prince.

THE PRINCE.

Wherefore?

ORVAL.

'T were pity if our friends should hear
From one whose name was honorable once
Words that dishonor it. (*Aloud.*) Remember, sirs,
That unto him who of surrender speaks
The punishment is death.

THE COUNT, THE BARON, AND THE PRINCE TO-
GETHER.

The punishment
Is death to him that of surrender speaks.

OMNES.

Ay, no surrender! Death, but no surrender!
[They go out.]

ORVAL.

Where is my son?

ANDREW.

In the north tower. He sits
All day upon the flinty step beneath
The iron door that on the dungeons opes,
Singing strange songs.

ORVAL.

The western bastion arm
More strongly. We are weakest on that side.
See that the wall be double manned: this night

They may attack us. Go, good Andrew, ere
The sun sinks from our western outlook mark
The enemy, and bring me word of him.

ANDREW.

God help us! O my lord, our soldiers faint.
They are o'erwatched.

ORVAL.

There is no lack of wine
For princely tables in our cellars stored.
Broach them the best.

ANDREW.

I will, my lord.

ORVAL.

See to it.

[Exit Andrew.]

(Orval ascends the ramparts, and eyes the plain from
beside the standard of St. John, which is planted on the
ramparts.)

Yonder, from his red ramparts of the west,
Into his black and cloudy coffin, sinks
The bloody sun. And yonder spreads the foe.
My day is setting. And, like thee, O sun,
I to a gory grave am going down.
I too, like thee, have travelled the world round.
Bright be mine end as thine! When we are gone
What shall come after? On what world not ours
Still wilt thou shine, and we, thy peers, be dust,
Who, whiles we yet were living souls, to thee
No homage owed! The days are few and fast.
And soon I, — they, — all these, that keep the forms
And semblances of men, shall be dead clay.

What matter, if, while yet we are, we are
 Immortal in the moment we make ours ?
 O solitude of sovereignty ! which they
 That creep, and they that soar, aspire to reach,
 By no base crawling guile, nor no blind flight,
 But with the firm-set footsteps of a man
 Whose vision measures what his manful will
 Hath made the pathway of his purposes,
 I have attained to be this day supreme
 And paramount arbiter of those that were
 My seeming equals yesterday. Content !
 My days haste from me, but I grasp *myself*.
 O such as never in the time gone by
 I was, when through the dark of dreamless nights
 I watched the rising of thy nebulous star,
 Thou phantom Poesy, am I, who now
 Hail life's bright burning brief Reality !
 What if my days be numbered, being crammed
 With numberless delights ? And we will cheat
 The chary time with memorable deeds
 That shall outlive him, and whiles yet he lives
 Feed him on passionatest pleasures. War,
 Thou grand begetter of immortal men,
 Make thou this lean life big with burly lust
 Of glory, and fame gotten with a gust !

SCENE III. — *Night. A Chamber in the Fortress, in the wall of which is an iron door. Muriel is seated on the step of the door. Another door leading to the ramparts.*

ORVAL (*entering from the second door*).

A hundred men fresh-breathed to the redoubt !
 After the battle they that fought must rest.
 See the south battery armed.

A VOICE BEHIND THE DOOR.

God help us all !

ORVAL (*laying down his arms*).

Dear Muriel, thou hast heard the barking mouths
Of our artillery. But fear not, son !
Our walls are stout. 'T is not to-night, nor yet
To-morrow, they will fall.

MURIEL.

Yes. I have heard
The cannon, Father ; but I mind it not.
I have had other cause of fear.

ORVAL.

For me, lad ?

MURIEL.

No. For I know thine hour is not yet come.

ORVAL.

Mine hour ! Ay, truce to care ! My heart to-night
Is light and vacant. If the raven croaks,
'T is o'er the corpses of our enemies
Which we have left to feed him in the glen.
I am all thine. Tell me thy pretty thoughts, lad,
And I will hear thee as in the old time
In our old home.

MURIEL.

Follow me, Father.

ORVAL.

Whither ?

MURIEL (*opening the iron door*).

Down to the Dread Tribunal.

ORVAL.

How, boy? Who
Hath taught thee to undo this iron door?
Hold, Muriel! hold! this gloomy stair leads down
Only to dismal subterranean dens,
Where rot the bones of long-forgotten men.

MURIEL.

Ay, Father. There, where thine imperial eye
No ray in the eternal midnight finds
To guide thy steps, my spirit its path discerns.
Follow. The darkness to the darkness goes.
[He descends. Orval snatches up the lamp, and follows.]

SCENE IV. — *Vast subterranean dungeons hewn in the rock, and strewn with rusty chains, bones, and old instruments of torture. Cells in various directions barred with iron gratings. The obscurity is feebly lighted by the lamp which ORVAL holds at the foot of a huge rocky stone; on the top of which MURIEL is standing, in a listening attitude.*

ORVAL.

Son! son!

MURIEL.

Hush, Father! hush!

ORVAL.

Come back ! come back !

MURIEL.

Dost thou not hear their voices ?

ORVAL.

Nothing, boy,
But the eternal silence of the tomb.

MURIEL.

Dost thou not see their forms ?

ORVAL.

I can perceive
Only the giant shadows to whose shapes
This wavering flame uncertain motion lends.

MURIEL.

I see them. They approach. One after one
Forth troop they from their gloomy dens, and sit
In dismal synod yonder.

ORVAL.

Wretched boy,
The night-damp's giddy cold doth fever thee!
Boy, wilt thou rob me of the little strength
That 's left me, who now need so much ? so much !

MURIEL.

I see them, Father . . . pale and fearful forms
Dim-garmented, with solemn faces stern,

Assembling to the dreadful Judgment Seat ;
Whereto they summon ah, he comes, The
Accused !

ORVAL.

Muriel !

MURIEL.

Dost thou hear them ?

ORVAL.

Muriel !

VOICES (*faintly, out of the far darkness*).

By the rights that from wrongs we have wrung,
By the power that on pain hath been nurtured,
We, — who were strangled and hung,
We, — who were fettered and tortured,
Limbs that were galled by the gyve,
Flesh that was burned in the fire,
Bodies once buried alive
In the midnight and mire,
We arise in the fulness of time :
And, for robes, in our wrongs we array us,
Who are judges at last of the crime
Which the sons for the fathers must pay us.
For the guilty too late is repentance
Now that we, who were victims, are fates ;
And Satan our terrible sentence
To execute waits.

ORVAL.

What seest thou, Muriel ?

MURIEL.

The Accused ! the Accused !

ORVAL.

Who is he ?

MURIEL.

Father ! Father, 't is *thyself* !

ORVAL.

O boy ! O son ! Must *thou* my doomsman be ?THE VOICES (*growing louder*).

Son of a race accurst, in thee
All its crimes completed be :
All its powers united, all
Its grandeurs, grandest in thy fall :
All the passions, all the pride
Which the dead Past deified !
Of thy race the last, yet first,
Thou the greatest, thou the worst,
Highest crowned, and deepest curst !
Fated son of fatal sires,
In whose glory flash their fires
Brightest as the flame expires !

ORVAL.

What hearest thou ? what art thou gazing at ?
Muriel, I charge thee, come ! Unman me not.

A VOICE IN THE DARKNESS.

Because thou never hast loved aught, nor ever
Hast aught adored save thine own self, O soul,

Therefore the face of God shalt thou see never.
Evil thy course, Damnation be thy goal!

ORVAL.

Son, I see nothing. But methinks I hear
From underground, and in the gloomy air
Above me, mutterings, menaces, and moans.

MURIEL.

But HE now lifts his head, haughty as thine
When thou art angered, Father, and responds
To the dread shadows that do challenge him,
With resolute defiance, even as thou
When those whom thou despisest are not weak.

THE VOICES.

As we, in our wretchedness, wretchedly thou
Shalt perish unburied, unblest, unknown,
And never a tomb upon earth shall show
If the dust beneath it were once thine own.
None shall weep for thee : none shall pray for thee :
Never a parting psalm be sung,
Never a priest shall point death's way for thee,
Never a passing bell be rung.
Swift and sudden thine end shall be,
And bloody and bitter as ours hath been.
With the self-same chain
To this rock of pain,
Yet black with the blood we have bled in vain,
As thy fathers bound us, do we bind thee,
To bleed unpitied and die unseen!

ORVAL.

At last I see and know ye, Spirits damned!

MURIEL.

Father, advance not ! In the name of Christ
I do beseech thee, Father !

ORVAL.

Muriel,

What seest thou yet ?

MURIEL.

A form.

ORVAL.

Whose form ?

MURIEL,

Thine own.

Thy second self — thine image — ghastly pale —
Chained — and they torture it. I hear it groan.
Forgive me, Father, but

ORVAL.

My son !

MURIEL.

This night

My Mother came, and charged me

[He swoons, and falls.]

ORVAL.

Nothing else

Was wanting. To the threshold of Hell's Hall
Mine own son drags me. O Veronica,
Implacable Spirit ! and thou, God, to whom

I have so oft, and so intensely, prayed,
 Is all in vain? Away! down here i' the dark
 The shadows overcome me. Up! away!
 Back to the light! Where I have yet to combat
 With living men. When I have lost or won
 That combat, let what else remains begin:
 Eternal memory, and eternal pain!

[*Exit, bearing Muriel in his arms.*]

THE VOICES (*fainting away*).

Because thou never hast loved aught, nor ever
 Hast aught adored, but thine own self, O soul,
 Therefore shalt thou the face of God see never.
 Evil thy course, Damnation be thy goal!

SCENE V. — *Interior Court of the Fortress, crowded with the besieged nobles; old men, women, and children in various attitudes of distress. ORVAL in the midst, his arms folded. In front, the envoy of Panurge (an old noble and kinsman to Orval). Cries and confusion in the doors.*

ORVAL.

No. By my son's life, by my dead wife, no!

THE WOMEN.

Pity!

ORVAL.

No Pity. Providence to us
 Grants but the last grand general pity — death.

THE WOMEN.

Not here ! not here ! better the hangman's hands.
 We die of fever and of famine here.
 Our babes are corpses at our milkless breasts.

THE MEN.

'Sdeath ! but we 'll hear this honorable man.
 Send him not back unheard. We 'll hear the Envoy.
 He comes commissioned from Panurge's self
 To bring us terms. We 'll hear him. Speak, old
 man !

THE KINSMAN.

Good citizen was I my whole life long.
 Good citizen and honest is my heart.
 If I have undertaken to come here,
 Graced with the confidence of that great man
 Who is the People's Representative,
 It is because I understand my age,
 And recognize its glorious mission.

ORVAL.

Back,

Unworthy and ridiculous old man !
 Hide those gray hairs for shame, ere I forget
 The weakness they should honor.

(Andrew, hark !

Prithee, good knave, find Herman. Bid him haste
 With all our spears to join us here. Be swift.)

[Exit Andrew.]

A COUNT.

Orval, thy madness throws us all away.

OTHER NOBLES.

Are we his vassals ? 'Sdeath, he shall find out
What we are made of ! We 'll no more obey him.

THE PRINCE.

This honest Envoy, this good nobleman,
Brings us, I doubt not, honorable terms.
Behooves us hear them in our own behalf.

THE OTHERS.

Keeping our lives, we 'll yield the citadel.

THE ENVOY.

The great man who hath sent me grants your lives
To all of you, upon the just condition
That you henceforth become good citizens,
And recognize the age in which it is
Our glorious privilege to live.

OMNES.

Well spoken !

We recognize the age in which it is
Our glorious privilege to live. We wish
To be henceforth good citizens.

ORVAL.

Curs ! hounds !

My very noble, somewhat foolish, most
Forgetful friends, methinks before you were
Good citizens you swore a certain oath
As loyal noble men to die with me
Rather than yield, save with your valued lives,

One inch of these old walls. That oath be sure
 I shall not break, — nor you ! Good citizens,
 I mean to make you die like men, although
 I cannot make you live like gentlemen.
 Aha, you love your lives ? you wish to be
 Good citizens ? you recognize (pray how ?)
 The glorious age in which you have found out
 It is a privilege to live ? Then ask
 Your fathers why they taught you to oppress
 And to despise all sons of Adam born,
 Ungraced by what the despicable lives
 You care to keep have to disgraces turned
 Your most dishonored titles ?

You, Sir Count,
 Ask your half-starved, emancipated serfs
 How you have recognized this glorious age
 In which it is your privilege to live.
 And you, sir ? Life 's a privilege, no doubt.
 But how have you employed it ? Playing cards,
 Corrupting women, in soft foreign lands
 Squandering the misused revenues your hard
 And grasping bailiffs wrung from the sore toil
 Of miserable peasants in your own,
 To pay your joyless orgies ?

You, my lord,
 You also recognize this glorious age ;
 In which your special privilege, we know,
 Hath ever been to fawn upon the strong
 And trample on the weak.

What, Lady ! you too ?
 Last of how many other loves, not all
 Quite glorious, do you love this glorious age ?
 It was *your* privilege — but have you used it ? —
 To teach your children to be brave and true,

High-minded, pure, — and so add honest men
To this most honest world in which it is
Our privilege to live.

O you great gods !
Must men be turned to worms before they die ?
Death is before us : but, like soldiers, march
With me to find it in a soldier's grave,
And not, as felons, where the hangman waits
To trim the gallows.

NOBLES (*whispering to each other*).

How can we rely
Upon the promise of this renegade ?
He brings no written word. Report avers
Panurge never spares when he can smite.

OTHERS.

Ay, that 's to pause at. Once in those red hands,
Who knows what worse than death may be our
doom ?

OTHERS.

Dead men, though, are we now. In all our stores
There 's not a crumb of bread left.

THE WOMEN.

Men, have mercy
On us, and on your children ! Must we starve ?
Yonder there 's bread enough to feed our slaves
Till they be fat. And here we die by inches.

THE MEN.

We 'll hear the Envoy further.

OTHERS.

No, at once
Surrender. There's no holding out.

OTHERS.

Surrender !
Surrender ! we waste time.

THE ENVOY.

I promise you,
As I have said, your liberties and lives
If you surrender. Pleading for your sakes
Who, though unwise, I yet will hope, my friends,
This much have I obtained of that great man
Who with his confidence hath honored me.

ORVAL.

Hence, hound ! or plead for thine own life.
[Andrew and Herman enter, with troops.]
Ho, comrades !
Miss not your mark . . . yon Cap of Liberty,
The terror of its worthy wearer, now
Sets shaking on his foolish forehead. Aim !
[The Envoy runs off.]

ORVAL.

Find, bind, and to his master send him back.
A moment, gentlemen ! — I have a word
To say to some old friends here.
[Addressing his soldiers in turn.]
Luke, thy hand !
It is not easy to forget thy face
While yet it keeps that scar : and I remember

No huntsman ever handled hunting spear
As thou with that left hand of thine. Ah, Luke,
The boars had a bad time of it when we
Were somewhat younger. And hast thou forgot-
ten

That day I saved thee from a broken neck
On the Black Mountain, when we could not find
The izard we had shot ?

And you, old friends;
Faith, 't was a lucky chance that fired your farms,
For we rebuilt them better. Eh ?

And you,
Do you remember when to our domains,
Flying from your bad lord, you came by night ?
I think you lacked not shelter, aid, and food,
Till we found land to build you houses on,
And fields for your own tillage.

Well, the times
Are changed since then : and may be you are
changed,

As others are. The ground I go to win
Is scant, and only wide enough to hold
One brave man's bones. Long have you followed
me.

But now if you would follow me, old friends,
It must be to the grave. I counsel you
Rather to follow these most noble lords
Who love their lives, as doubtless you love yours,
And leave me here to die, a little wiser,
But not much sadder, friends, than I have lived.

SOLDIERS.

Long live our noble master ! long live Orval !

ORVAL.

See that whatever rests of meat and wine
Be shared among our faithful soldiers, Herman.
Then to the ramparts ! Friends, this braggart foe
Shall find there is some life left in us yet.

HERMAN.

Wine, boys, and meat ! then to the ramparts, ho !

ANDREW.

The will of God be done ! We are all dead men.

SOLDIERS.

God bless Lord Orval ! Wine and meat, lads !
Come !

[Exeunt soldiers.]

THE WOMEN.

Orval, we curse thee in our children's name !

CHILDREN.

God, curse this Orval, for our fathers' sake !

MEN.

For our wives' sake we curse thee, Orval !

ORVAL.

Curse
Yourselves for cowards. To the ramparts, ho !

SCENE VI. — *Ramparts of St. John. Corpses, dismounted cannon, and broken arms scattered over the ground. Distant artillery and shouts of victory outside. Soldiers passing rapidly across the stage. ORVAL in the breach. ANDREW beside him.*

ORVAL (*sheathing his sword*).

To conquer danger is to conquer fate.
We have repulsed them.

ANDREW.

Our last cartridges
Have served us well. But they must rally soon.
And then . . . There's not a pound of powder left
Among us all.

ORVAL.

What! is all spent?

ANDREW.

My lord,
No mortal man can conquer destiny.

ORVAL.

Bring my son to me, Andrew.

ANDREW.

Ay, my lord.

ORVAL (*looking over the wall*).

The smoke of battle hath obscured my sight.
The glen beneath me seems to swim and sink

In a great sea of blood, and yonder crags
To stagger like sick men. So much my thoughts
My senses have confounded.

[Seats himself in the breach.]

What avails

The short-lived angel of this little world,
Whose name is man, to get himself called great,
If after a few years of noisy life
Into the eternal silence he falls back?
One should be God or nothing.

[Andrew enters with Muriel.]

Andrew, take

A dozen trusty men of mine own band;
Search every cellar, every vault explore,
And beat back to the ramparts and the walls
All those whom there methinks that thou shalt find
Skulking concealed.

ANDREW.

Even Princes, Counts, and Dukes?

ORVAL.

All whom thou findest.

[Exit Andrew.]

Son, give me thy hand.

It is the last time that thy father's lips
May touch thy brow. 'Tis like thy mother's, boy.

MURIEL.

Father, before the trumpet called to arms,
I heard her voice.

ORVAL.

What said she ?

MURIEL.

“ Son, to-night
Thou shalt be with me.”

ORVAL.

Naught of me ?

MURIEL.

Naught else.
Only, “ Thou shalt be with me, son, to-night.”

ORVAL.

Will my strength fail me here, at the last stage
Of life's disastrous journey ? One step more.
Courage, tired heart ! the grave is near.

My son,
We are about to part. I cannot tell
If we shall ever meet again.

MURIEL.

O Father,
Leave me not ! We will go together.

ORVAL.

Child,
It may not be. Our ways are not the same.
Sad hath the life I gave thee been, my son,
But happiness awaits thee : and, among
Thy kindred cherubs, soon wilt thou forget
The earthly father thou shalt see no more.

MURIEL.

What are those cries ? I tremble. Hark ! they come,
 O Father, and the bellowing cannon-mouths
 Proclaim it . . . the *Last Hour* which was foretold !
*(The nobles in disorder are driven to the walls, pursued
 by Andrew and Herman. Firing and shouts without.)*

ORVAL.

On, Herman ! On !

A VOICE IN THE CROWD.

You give us broken guns,
 No powder and no ball, and bid us stand
 Marks to be shot at !

OTHER VOICES.

'Sdeath ! How can we keep
 These shattered walls, unarmed, half-starved ? . . .
 Back ! back !

OTHERS.

Back ! Whither art thou driving us ?

ORVAL (*with a terrible cry*).

TO DEATH !

Son, son, one last embrace ! Boy, in this kiss
 Would that to thine I could unite my soul
 Forevermore ! But I begin to see
 The way that I am going. 'T is not thine.

[Muriel falls, struck by a ball, and dies.]

VOICE IN THE AIR.

To me, my Son's pure Spirit !

ORVAL.

Dead ? To me,
My peers in arms ! Dead ? And I loved him.
Friends,
The foe is but a sword's length from us. Up,
And roll him from the ramparts !

[The enemy begins to appear over the battlements.]

Who 's for Orval ?
An Orval, ho ! Down, Sons of Freedom ! down,
And feed the other nobler birds of prey.
An Orval ! ho, an Orval ! Friends, have at them !
[Exit, followed by all tumultuously.]

SCENE VII. — *Another part of the platform.*

NOBLES (*rushing past in disorder*).

The Red Flag waves over the Western Fort.
Fly ! they are on us.

FORCES OF THE ENEMY IN PURSUIT.

Freedom, and No Quarter !

THE ENVOY (*of Scene V.*).

That is the chief lieutenant of Lord Orval.
You know me, all, an honest citizen.
The scoundrel beat, and did misuse me vilely,
When for the People's Cause I pleaded here.
'T is a blood-thirsty knave. I say, he beat me.
Down with him, honest citizens !

ANDREW.

Ha, fox!

The old dog hath a tooth left in his head.

[Wounds the Envoy.]

THE ENVOY.

The wretch will kill me. Help, good citizens!

CITIZENS.

That man shot Ralph. We saw him on the wall.
Down with the graybeard! Freedom, and No
Quarter!

*[Fighting. Andrew falls. They pass on.]*ORVAL (*entering, covered with blood, his sword drawn*).

This way they followed when those cowards fled.
Who's here? What, Andrew? Art thou down,
old friend?
Thou bleedest?

ANDREW.

Ay, to death.

ORVAL.

O brave, and true!

O my old faithful servant!

ANDREW.

Let me be.

I am a dying man.

ORVAL.

I'll leave thee not.

ANDREW.

Go, get you gone. I am dying..

ORVAL.

All that 's left

Of Orval, gallant soldier, I give thee
In these true tears. There 's no one left on earth
To shed such tears for me.

ANDREW.

Then keep thy tears.

ORVAL.

I'll help thee hence.

ANDREW.

I am past help of all
Save the great God into whose hand I fall.
Look to thyself. There's that upon thy soul
I would not have on mine for all the glory
Of all the kingdoms of the world.

[Dies.

ORVAL (*flinging his sword over the wall*).

Away !

Go also thou, last trusty friend ! No more
Shall Orval need thy service. We go hence
As naked as we came. Now nothing's left
Of Orval save himself. All mine are fall'n,

And those poor trembling wretches whom I ruled
Are kneeling their new master.

[*Looks round.*

Here all 's bare.

The foe returns not. We will rest awhile.
This is as good 'a height as any other
From which to look back on the broken world
Which I have thrown behind me, and consider
What sort of thing it was. Hark! now again
The cry comes this way. Ha! from the North
Tower

The red flag flutters. 'T is my name they call.
The rabble shrieks for Orval. Bloodhounds base,
Have you no scent? Here is your noble quarry!
(*Shouting from the wall.*) Orval is here! Behold
me. I am Orval!

But ye are not my judges, wretched grains
Of most ignoble dust which the wild wind
Of aimless accident awhile blows up,
Nor yet my doomsmen. By no mortal hand
Dies Orval.

(*He mounts the wall, and gazes over the precipice beneath.*)

Earth, take back whate'er of thine
Held for a while this yet unconquered Spirit,
Which now goes hence. All mine eternity
I see before me, — black and terrible,
And, in the midst, God, like a sun that burns
Forever, lighting nothing. Farewell, world!
Receive me, thou, my native element,
Into whose vast and sombre depths, thus, thus,
With outstretcht arms and opened spirit, I plunge!

(*He leaps from the wall, and disappears into the abyss beneath.*)

SCENE VIII. — *Interior Court of the Fortress. Flourish of Trumpets. The conquered Nobles, with their wives and children, are led in, chained. After them, Panurge, the Modern Brutus, General Castrocaro (see Epoch IV., Scene III.), and other Revolutionary Chiefs. With them, the Envoy.*

PANURGE (*addressing the prisoners*).

Thy name ?

FIRST PRISONER.

Enulphus, Seignior of Beaurain.

PANURGE.

A name that shall be heard on earth no more.
Thine ?

SECOND PRISONER.

Guy de Malpas, Lord of Montmirail.

PANURGE.

Thou hast pronounced it the last time. And thine ?

THIRD PRISONER.

Pons, Prince of Arden.

PANURGE.

Thine ?

FOURTH PRISONER.

John, Duke of Orm.

PANURGE.

Struck from the list of living men, John, Pons !

CASTROCARO.

These rascals have our forces held in check
Nigh four whole months ; and you see here with
what :
Some dozen guns, and obsolete parapets !

BRUTUS.

How many more of them remain ?

PANURGE.

O, take them !
They are not worth our reckoning. Take them
hence,
And make examples of them all . . . save one —
Whatever one of all of them can tell
Where we shall find this Orval.

SEVERAL VOICES.

When the trump
That called our troops in sounded victory,
Sudden he disappeared. Till then, we saw him
Here, there, and everywhere, from wall to wall.

THE ENVOY.

Citizen President, suffer me to speak
As intercessor for these prisoners' lives.
'T is they, Great Citizen, that did erewhile
(Upon my urging what the love I bear
The People's Cause gave eloquence to urge)

Into my hands deliver up the keys
Of this strong place, where else we had not stood
Triumphant now. Which conduct, I opine,
Deserves the praise of all good citizens,
And proves they are good citizens themselves.

PANURGE.

Be silent, citizen! I recognize
No intercessor 'twixt mine own right hand
And my decrees. Thyself shall see them hanged.
I charge thee with the expedition of it.

ENVOY.

Good citizen, my life long, have I been.
The proofs are patent. But I did not serve
The People's Cause to see my kinsmen killed
Like common felons

PANURGE.

This old Doctrinaire
 Is wearisome. Gag him, and hang him tight.
 March. Where is Orval? Who can bring us to
him?

A sack of gold for Orval dead or alive!

[Enter a Lieutenant.

What news? Hast thou seen Orval?

LIEUTENANT.

Citizen Chief,

By order of the General Castrocarao
I, with my men, the western ramparts stormed.
There, as we entered, by the parapet

Of the third bastion, we beheld a man
 Alone amid the dying and the dead.
 "Seize him!" I cried. And at the word our
 troops
 Had wellnigh scaled the bastion, when the man
 Sprang to the outer rock — there paused — and
 seemed
 With searching glance to sound the abyss beneath
 him ;
 Then spread his arms, and, as a swimmer drops
 Into the sea, he plunged. We saw no more :
 But heard the body bound from stone to stone
 Over the precipice. His sword we found
 Under the parapet. Behold it here.

PANURGE.

There 's blood upon the hilt, and on the blade
 The arms of Orval graven. Well I know it.
 He hath kept his word. Glory to him ! To you
 The gallows.
(To Castrocaro.) See them hung within an hour.
 Then set about the razing of this Fort.
 Brutus !

*(Exeunt all but the Modern Brutus, who approaches
 Panurge. They seat themselves on the bastion.)*

BRUTUS.

Yon sun that now is setting fast
 Shall rise to-morrow on an altered world !
 Thou hast watched long, and needest rest. Dear
 Master,
 Incessant care hath stol'n a march on age,
 And marked thy forehead first.

PANURGE.

The hour of rest

Is not for me, boy, yet. The last death-groan
 Of my grand foe completes but half my task.
 Nothing's done yet. All, all remains to do.
 From Orval's death my life begins. Look forth.
 See yonder plains whose dark immensity,
 Beneath us, stretches 'twixt my thoughts and
 me ;

The yet untraversed field of my designs !
 Those smouldering homesteads must be palaces ;
 Those deserts we must people ; pierce yon rocks ;
 With golden harvests clothe those arid tracts ;
 Dry up those marshes ; plant yon barren heath ;
 Channel this valley, and that waste redeem ;
 Unite those lakes, and give to each his part
 And profit of the soil our swords have won ;
 Until the living be the dead twice told
 In number, and the new world's opulence
 Outshine the old world's riches. Until then
 We have not justified our first dread deed,
 Destruction's drear necessity.

BRUTUS.

To achieve

Those giant tasks, the God of Liberty
 Will give us strength.

PANURGE.

What say'st thou of a God ?

Here, our foot slips in human blood. That blood
 Was once a living thing, which thought, spake,
 acted.

What is it now ? Behind me I can see
 Nothing but these dismantled fortress walls ;
 Before me, nothing but yon wasted plain ;
 And yet I feel as though, besides us two,
 SOME ONE were here.

BRUTUS.

Why here 's what was, indeed,
 Some one an hour ago, but nothing now.
 See how his corpse is mangled !

PANURGE.

Not so much
 But I can recognize his face. It was
 Lord Orval's faithful servant. That man's name,
 I think, was Andrew. But that man is dead,
 And has no name now. Or, at least, no name
 That we can guess. Yet there 's a Spirit here,
 A living Spirit, (hath It any name ?)
 A dreadful Spirit of I know not Whom,
 And know not What, seems hovering over us.
 Mark, Brutus, yon black boulder jutting out
 From the steep precipice. There 's blood on it.
 What if 't were Orval's ? There 's no special
 hue
 Of redness to distinguish one man's blood
 From any other man's. Yet men's blood differs.
 'T is there he must have fallen.

BRUTUS.

O my Chief,
 Why dost thou tremble ?

PANURGE.

Seest thou yonder, boy ?

BRUTUS.

Ay.

PANURGE.

What ?

BRUTUS.

Why, nothing but the setting sun
Reddening the cloud on yonder mountain peak.
What 's to be marked in that ?

PANURGE.

A sign ! a sign !
I know it. I have seen it in bad dreams.

BRUTUS.

Lean upon me. Thy face is white as death.

PANURGE.

Millions of men obey me. Multitudes,
Nations in arms. Where is my People ?

BRUTUS.

Hark !

Their cry is yet upon the air beneath us.
Thy People call thee. In their name, and mine,
Pluck those changed eyes from yonder reddening
rock !

PANURGE.

He stands there, still! Pierced with three nails,
which are
Three stars. His arms are stretched across the
world.
We cannot pass them.

BRUTUS.

Master, I see nothing.

Away! away!

PANURGE.

*Vicisti, Galileë!**[He dies.]*

IMITATIONS AND PARAPHRASES.

TO
CHAUNCY HARE TOWNSHEND,
BY ONE
WHO OWES TO HIM A LIFE-LONG DEBT OF
LOVE AND GRATITUDE,
THESE
PARAPHRASES AND IMITATIONS
ARE
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



NONNQS.



EUROPA.

IMITATION.

(From the opening of the First Dionysiac.)



ING, O goddess, the thunder-breath, the
bearer of lightening
From the luminous son of Kronos, the
ardent heralding
Of a bright child-birth, — the glow of a nuptial
glory, brightening
The fiery bridal chamber of burning Semele ! Sing
The double birth of Bacchus, whom, moist from
the midst o' the flame,
Zeus pluckt, — the unripe fruit of a motherhood
half unblown :
Father and mother both was the god, by a twofold
name,
To him, for whose sweet sake a masculine womb
in his own
Self-wounded body he wrought ; forgetting not
how, of yore,
With the pang divine of another birth, parturient, he

Forth from out of his own bright swollen forehead
 bore
 Full-armed the dazzling dread of Athené issuing
 free.
 Bring, O Muses, to me bring bacchanal wands,
 and smite
 The shaken cymbals shrill, and fetch me the thyrsus
 spear,
 Famed of divine Dionysos ! And forthwith unto
 my sight,
 As I mingle your dances among, may the multi-
 form Proteus appear,
 Leaving afar by the Pharos his favorite isle, and
 rolled
 In changes many as be these mystical songs of mine !
 For, if like an orbéd dragon his trailing form he
 fold,
 I will sing how, under the ivied spear, in a war
 divine
 The turbulent giants were stricken, they and their
 dragon hair :
 And if, as a bellowing lion, he toss his billowy mane,
 Ye, as I sing, shall behold young Bacchus, my boy-
 god fair,
 In the arms of Rhea, snatching the nipple her lion
 cubs drain :
 But if, in the midst of his manifold metamorphose,
 anon
 Like a fretful leopard he leap, into praise my song
 shall roll,
 Singing how over the gorgeous Ind rode the tri-
 umphing son
 Of Zeus, when the pard and the elephant pulled at
 his chariot pole :

Then, if he should fashion himself to the form of a
tuskéd boar,
While he fashions himself, will I fashion my song
till its strain be aglow
With the loves of the son of Thyone, and how he
wedded of yore
Aura, the daughter of Cybele, Aura, the beautiful
foe
Of the tuskéd boars, the mother of that third Bac-
chus to be :
And again, what time away in 'a wave of the water
he glides,
With divine Dionysos my song shall be plunged
in the unplumbed sea,
As when, from the Thracian's assault, he fled un-
der the nethermost tides :
But if, into the shape of a rustling tree, at the last,
he shoot,
While his borrowed branches murmur, my song
shall be heard between,
Praising Icarios, lord of the winepress red when
the foot,
With the foot competing, crushes the glad grape
bunches green.
Bring to me, O Mimetones, the bacchanal wands,
and cover
(Brightly replacing thus this common diurnal vest)
With the fair and spotted fawn skin, fragrantly
sprinkled over
By odorous drops of the sweet Maronid nectar, my
breast !
Keep ye for Menelaos, — led by Homeros, and her
Whose hidden dwelling is down in the depths of
the hollow main,

Eidothea, — keep ye the coarse seal's coat of briny
 fur,
 And bring me the cymbals and buckler. Not mine
 be the dulcet strain
 Of the double-throated fife: lest Phœbos offended be.
 For I know he is vext by each vivid pipe's impor-
 tunate din
 Since the challenge of Marsyas; when he in scorn
 uphung on a tree
 The flesh of that felon flayed, and made of it a puft
 wine-skin,
 To punish his insolent pipe, having peeled the
 boaster bare,
 And left his bleeding limbs of their brown hide dis-
 possest.
 But thou, O goddess, begin! begin, and first de-
 clare
 The story of Kadmos old, and all his wandering
 quest.

On the beach of Sidon now, bull-shaped, with an
 upthrust horn,
 Zeus from a lying throat had sent forth a lovesick
 lowing,
 Softening an ardent eyeball; while, in light bonds
 upborne,
 Round the white limbs of a woman infant Eros was
 throwing
 Intertwinéd hands. For to her his curvéd throat
 The mariner bull bends low, down sinking a dute-
 ous knee;
 And, while o'er his glossy flank the girl's form
 seems to float,
 Bearing Europa, smoothly, silently, saileth he.

Out of the reach of the ripple, though faint with a lovely fear,

She, unmoving, is moved : so, silently, seated high
On the back of a scaly triton, as she on her swimming steer,

Thetis, and Aphrodité, and Galatéea go by.

Kyanochætēs admires the cloven-footed swimmer :

Triton afar replies to the god's insidious lowing,
From his clearly-echoing conch : and, aghast, in the dim green glimmer,

Nereus to Doris turns with a pointed finger, showing
That ravisht maiden fair, that hornéd sailor divine,
Shapes of wonder and awe ; for the girl's hand holds the horn

Of her breathing bark, like a helm, as he beats breast-deep the brine,

And the girl's eyes glance o'er the glooming wave with a gaze forlorn.

Desire her pilot is : and the crafty Boreas lifts

And puffs with an amorous breath her garment's floating fold ;

Over her bounteous bosom his silken sail he shifts,
And wantons there at his own wild will like a lover bold.

So on a dolphin borne when haply a Nereïd glides
To visit her liquid realms light over the lulléd sea,
At the touch of her guiding hand her sea-born steed divides

With a foamy furrow the fields that his azure pasture be.

Eros, herdsman now for the nonce, with his bow's sharp hook,

Turned into a pastoral goad, the mild bull's shoulder smites :

Through Poseidon's liquid fallows while thus, with
the shepherd crook
Of Kypris, he the hornéd spouse of Heré excites,
The pure and austere cheek of virgin Pallas (cold
maid
That never a mother knew) is flusht with a scorn-
ful shame,
Beholding her mighty father, the son of Kronos,
wade
In a watery furrow, led by a woman's finger, tame.
But the mid-sea wave and tide give way to the ar-
dent god;
For was it not down in the mid-sea deeps that the
globéd blue
With the birth of Aphrodité brightened and great-
ened and glowed?
And Europa leads and is led, and is captain and
cargo too.

VIRGIL.

THE BEES OF ARISTÆUS.

PARAPHRASE.

(From the Fourth Georgic.)

v. 317.



THE shepherd Aristæus, when his bees
 Sickness (so runs the tale) or dearth de-
 stroyed,
 Along Peneian Tempe's flying, above
 The sacred headspring rested sad, and thus,
 With much-reproachful moan, his parent called :
 "Mother Cyrene, who the gulfy deeps
 Of this stream holdest ! mother, if indeed
 Thymbræan Apollo, as thou dost aver,
 Be my begetter, why was I begot
 To bear the grudge of most unfavorable fates,
 Though from the gods' illustrious lineage sprung ?
 Or whither fleddest is thy sometime love
 Of us, whom wherefore didst thou oft exhort
 To hope the heaven itself ? For now, behold,
 Even the poor honor of this mortal life,
 By me, endeavoring all things, barely wrung
 From tilth and the hard tendance of the herd,
 Thou being my mother, I must needs forego !
 Haste, therefore, to make end ! with thine own hand
 Uproot my pleasant woodland places all,

VOL. II.

26

Fall on my sheepfolds with unfriendly fire,
 Burn up my barns, my crops exterminate,
 And lay the tough axe to my tender vines,
 If thou art weary of thy son's renown."

That sound, in halls beneath the waters high,
 The mother heard. Around her sat the Nymphs,
 Plucking Milesian wools of watchet hue :
 Drymo, and Xantho, and Phyllodoce,
 With sparkling tresses round their white necks
 poured ;
 Légia, and Nisæa, and Thalía,
 And Spio, and Cymodoce ; with whom
 Maiden Cydippe, and Lycoria
 O' the yellow hair, to whom were newly known
 Lucina's earliest labors ; Beroë,
 And Clio, sister Oceanitides :
 Each with gold fillet girt about the brows,
 Each garbed in skins gay-colored ; and Ephyre,
 Opis, and Asian Deiopeia ; and, all
 Her darts at last laid by, swift Arethuse.

Among them Clymene the tale was telling
 Of Vulcan's frustrate forethought, and the frauds
 Of Mars, and his sweet thefts ; and all the loves
 Full-frequent of the gods, since Chaos was,
 She numbered. Taken by whose song, the while
 The listening Nymphs around their spindles whirled
 The fluent threads, yet once again that moan
 Of Aristæus struck his mother's ears ;
 And all those Nymphs upon their glassy seats
 Were startled. Foremost of her sisters then,
 Above the topmost wave her yellow head
 Upheaving, Arethusa glanced around :

And, from aloof, "Not idly scared," she cried,
"Sister Cyrene, by such moan wert thou;
Whose chiefest care, sad Aristæus' self,
Stands by the wave of thy Peneian Sire
Weeping, and, by thy name, thee, cruel, calls."
To her the mother by new fear heart-struck,
"O hither bring him, bring him unto us!
To him," she cried, "the thresholds of the gods
It is vouchsafed to traverse." And forthwith
She bade the waters wide asunder shrink,
Wherethrough the youth might enter. The
 scooped wave
Even as a mountainous hollow, around him hung:
The abyss received him to its bosom vast,
And down beneath the river he was drawn.

There moves he, marvelling at his mother's home,
And her wet kingdoms: lakes in caverns locked,
And sounding groves: there, by the unwieldy toil
Of waters all bewildered, round he looks,
And in their places sees those rivers all
That wander underneath the massy earth:
Phasis, and Lycus, and the headspring high
Whence, first from underground, Enipeus bursts,
Whence Father Tiber, whence smooth Anio flows,
And roughly-sounding rocky Hypanis,
Mysian Caïcus, and, with double horn,
Golden bull-browed Eridanus, than whom
No river through rich-cultured lands goes down
More passionately into the purple sea.

Soon as her son was entered in, beneath
Her chamber's sparry-hanging roof, and there
Cyrene knew his woes, though vainly wept,

Not irremediable, in order round,
 Her sisters all their liquid fountains pour
 Upon his hands ; and diapers they bear
 Daintily woven. Part, the tables load
 With viands, and full goblets range. Anon,
 With fired Panchæan spice the altars glow.
 And, "Take we beakers of Mæonian wine,"
 The mother cried, "and to Oceanus
 Libations pour !" So saying, herself the Sire
 Of all things, Ocean, and her Sister Nymphs,
 (The hundred woodland ministers, and they
 That tend 'upon the streams, a hundred more,)
 Invoking, thrice with liquid nectar drenched
 The blazing altar. Thrice the quickened flame,
 High as the roof-top leaping, flashed. Then she,
 By that fair omen fortified, began :

"There dwells in the Carpathian gulf a Sage
 To Neptune dear ; sea-colored Proteus. He
 That wanders the wide water, charioted
 By his two-footed steeds to fishes joined,
 Now to revisit his loved native land
 Pallene, and the Emathian port, is gone.
 Him, both we Nymphs revere, and Nereus' self,
 Our Sire grandæval : for to him, as seer,
 Be all things known, that are, or once have been,
 Or in the far-off time are yet to be.
 So pleased it Neptune, whose unwieldy flocks,
 Rank seals, he pastures underneath the gulf.
 Him, son, behooves thee first to seize and bind,
 That he thy cause of mischief may declare,
 And second the event. For counsel none
 He unenforced vouchsafes : nor mayst thou him
 Beseeching turn : on whom, when caught, hard force

And chains essay : round these, if thou persist,
His frustrate wiles shall waste themselves away.
Myself, what time the sun's mid-ardors burn,
When thirsty is the herb, and to the herd
Most pleasant every haunt of happy shade,
Thee to the hiding-places will conduct
Wherein the old man, weary from the wave,
Betakes himself, whom there, in slumber sunk
Supine, thou mayst most easily assail.
Howbeit, when him thou holdest in thy hands
Fast bound, his various aspects, even then,
Shall fool thee with brute faces counterfeit :
For sudden shall he seem a bristly boar,
Fell tigress, dragon scaled, and lioness
With tawny mane ; or, to escape his chains,
Give forth anon sharp sound of crackling flame,
Or, in thin waters falling, melt away.
But thou, the more he shift his shapes, so
much

The more, son, tighten stern his stubborn bonds ;
Till to the same his form returns, as when
With sleepy eyelids sunk thou saw'st him first.

So counselled she : and liquid odor poured
Ambrosial o'er her son, that all his frame
With fragrance flooded : on his curls composed
Came breathing gusts of sweet, and to his limbs
Light nimble health.

A hollow huge there is,
Deep-caverned in the side of a hoar crag,
Wherein the oft wind-beaten wave o' the sea
Into long gorges breaks, and falls ; erewhile
To storm-struck mariners a haven safe.
There Proteus, under the broad beetling cliff,

Houseth : and there, turned from the light o' the day,
 The Nymph among the shadows placed the youth.
 Herself, at hand, in vapor veiled, retires.

By this, swift Sirius, scorching thirsty Ind,
 Was hot in heaven : and now the fiery sun
 His middle orbit had nigh filled : the grass
 Was parching : and to muddy ooze the beams
 Baked in their sucked and shrunken river-beds
 The tepid brooks ; when from the sea-wave forth
 Came Proteus, seeking his accustomed cave.
 Around him the vast deep's moist people played.
 And, shambling, shook abroad the salt sea-spray.
 Anon, to slumber, scattered here and there,
 About the sea-beach, settled the sea-beasts.
 Himself, meanwhile, as one that tends his herds
 The hills among, what time the Even star
 Back to their stalls his beeves from pasture bids,
 And the lambs' bleating the 'wolf's hunger whets,
 Above them, in the midst, upon a crag
 Sat down considerate, and their number told.

Whom to assail soon as the chance he spied,
 Scarce Aristæus the old man vouchsafed
 Scant time to stretch at ease his wearied limbs,
 But with alarum loud upon him rushed,
 Prone where he lay, and him fast manacled.
 He, not unmindful of his art meanwhile,
 Himself to all manner of marvellous shapes trans-
 formed ;
 Fire, formidable beast, and flowing stream.
 But, when by no false seeming might he 'scape,
 Vanquisht, he turned anon into himself,
 With human countenance resumed ; and said :

"Rash boy, who bade thee our abodes approach?
Or here what seek'st thou?" But the other
cried:

"Proteus, thou know'st: thyself, thou know'st:
nor thee

May any man in aught deceive. Do thou
Therefore, thine own deceivings, prithee, cease.
Here, to the gods obedient, are we come,
Of our misfortunes to inquire the cause."
Thus far he spake: whereto in answer, shaken
By mighty spasms, the prophet around him rolled
The glassy glare of his sea-colored eyes,
And grimly gnashing, thus the fates declared:

"Thee nothing less than wrath divine reproves.
Large debt thou owest of evil done: and worse
(If fates forbid not) hast deserved, than these
Retributive woes by wretched Orpheus waked,
Indignant raging for his ravisht spouse.
She headlong flying, headlong to her doom,
From thy pursuit the river-banks along,
Spurned with unheedful steps in the high reed
A hydra huge that by the rivage housed.
The hill-tops, then, with their lamentings loud,
In chorus, her companion Dryads filled:
Deep moaned the Rhodopeian mountains: moaned
Craggy Pangaea, and the region wild
Of Rhesus: moaned those realms the Getomaer:
Hebrus: and where, from Athens, the North Wind
Bore ravisht Orithyia to his haunt.
But he, his heart's love-sickness solacing
To a hollow shell, the lonesome shores along,
Thee, at the dawning of the day, sweet wife,
Thee, at the darkening, solitary sung.

"Down, even, through the jaws of Tænarus, down
 To the high doors of Dis, and that black grove,
 With hideous darkness horrible, he went :
 Down to the Manes, and their dreadful king,
 And hearts to human prayers implacable.
 Moved by his music from the nether seats
 Of Erebus, lean shades and lightless shapes
 Came flocking, thick as birds, at eventide,
 In multitudes, that to the woodlands wing,
 Or from the hills are driven by winter rains :
 Matrons, and men, and bodies with no life
 Of high-souled heroes, and unwedded maids,
 Children, and youths upon the funeral pyre
 Before the faces of their parents stretched :
 Whom the slow ooze of that unlovely marsh
 About Cocytus binds with sooty slime
 And shapeless sedge, or ninefold Styx constrains.

"Amazement all the habitations husht
 Of Tartarus, and the inmost depths of death,
 And those cold tangled coils of livid snakes
 Woven in the locks of the Eumenides :
 Cerberus his three silenced jaws withheld
 Wide gaping : and Ixion's orbéd wheel,
 Stilled from the whirling of the wild wind, stood.

"Anon, returning, all those perils 'scaped,
 With his restored Eurydice, what time
 He reached the upper airs (behind him she :
 For such command Proserpina imposed),
 That lover rash his frenzied fancy seized ;
 Fault to forgive, if Death forgiveness knew !
 Sudden he paused ; and his Eurydice, —
 His, now that day's true light is reached at last,

Unmindful, by his love, alas, o'ercome,
Turned to behold : thus all his labor lost :
Broken his pact with Death's unpardoning lord :
And thrice, from all his fens, Avernus shrieked !

“ ‘ Ah, what hath lost me, miserable,’ she moaned,
‘ Orpheus, and thee ? what fatal frenzy this ?
Me, hark ! once more the cruel Fates recall,
And sleepy death my swimming sight obscures.
Farewell ! For I fare hence, in the vast night
That gathers round me, and in vain to thee
Weak hands am waving ; thine, alas, no more ! ’
Speaking, she faded sudden from his sight,
Like vapor mixt with unsubstantial air :
Nor him, yet yearning ah how much to say,
And shadows pale with frustrate passion clasping,
She any more beheld : for nevermore
The ferry-men of Orcus to o'erpass
The opposing deep permitted. What to do
Is left him ? whither should he turn ? to whom
Appeal, who mourns a now twice-ravisht spouse ?
The Manes by what weeping, by what voice
Of wail may he the Nether Powers, appease ?
She, cold, meanwhile, in Stygian bark is borne.

“ Him, rumored tales report, for seven whole months
Continuous, weeping on a windy crag
Far off by Strymon's solitary wave :
Charmed from their lairs by his melodious moan,
Came tigers, creeping under caverns cold,
Lulled into languor, and the lured oak-trees.
So Philomela in the poplar shade
Laments, bewailing her departed brood,
Whom, haply, passing, the hard ploughman spied,

And from the nest, yet callow, filched : but she
Mourns, brooding night by night upon the bough,
There pours and pours her miserable song,
And with sad plainings fills the region round.

“No woman’s beauty him, nor wedlock, soothed.
Lonely along the Hyperborean wilds
Of ice, and frosty Tanaïs, and the wolds
Unwidowed ever of Rhipæan snows
Wandering, his lost Eurydice he wailed,
And the vain gifts of Dis. Stung by his scorn *
The Thracian women, in the revels fierce
Of midnight Bacchus, and the season due
To rites divine, the youth asunder rent,
And wide upon the wilds his ruins strewed.
Even then, though from the marble shoulders torn,
The while his head Cægrian Hebrus whirled
Down the mid-stream, still ‘Ah Eurydice!’
‘Hapless Eurydice!’ from chilly lips
The voice called ever; and the parting soul,
‘Eurydice!’ ‘Eurydice!’ the rocks
All down the stream re-echoed as it rolled.”
Thus Proteus : and adown the steep he sprang,
Plunged, and the bubbling billow above him whirled.
But not Cyrene. “Son,” to him, o’erawed,
Returning lightly, “put away,” she said,
“Sad thoughts out of thy heart. Of thy mischance
This the sole cause. For this, unhappy boy,
The woodland Nymphs, with whom her wont it was
In the high groves to wake the choral dance,
Death on thy bees have sent. But, suppliant, thou
Bring offerings, and imploring peace, revere

* “*Quo munere*,” &c. By which pious office of his rendered indignant, &c.

The mild Napææ, that to votive gifts,
In wrath relentful, light forgiveness grant.
The manner, first, of thy beseeching them
In order due will I declare. Four bulls
Well chosen, and in shape surpassing all,
Of those, now thine, that on the summits feed
Of green Lycæus, and, by yoke untoucht,
Heifers as many more, do thou select:
Therewith, four altars to those goddesses,
In their high precincts, build : and from the throats
Of these let forth the sacred blood : and leave
The bodies of them in the leafy grove.
Then, when her rising the ninth dawn reveals,
Lethæan poppies to the nether ghost
Of Orpheus offer : and a heifer slay,
With a black sheep, appeased Eurydice
Revering thus : and to the grove return."

Nor lingered he. But those maternal words
Duteous obeyed. Forth to the hallowed groves
He went ; and there the altars raised, and there
Four chosen bulls, in shape surpassing all,
And heifers by the yoke as yet untoucht
As many more, he led. Anon, what time,
This done, her rising the ninth dawn revealed,
Lethæan poppies to the nether ghost
Of Orpheus given, he to the grove returned.
But there a wonder, sudden, and to tell
Surpassing strange, was witnessed. All about
Those bulls' half-molten entrails, and deep down
I' the heifer's womb, a sound of humming bees,
That, bubbling up from out the bursten ribs,
Swarmed forth in clouds innumerable : and now
They fly together on the tall tree-tops,
And from the bended boughs in cluster hang.

LUCRETIUS.



INVOCATION TO VENUS

AND

INTRODUCTION OF THE EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY.

PARAPHRASE.

(*De rerum natura*, lib. 1.)



ENIGNANT Mother of the Ænead race,
Venus, to gods and men delightful ! Thou
That, underneath the sliding signs of
heaven,
With concourse throngest the ship-bearing sea
And fruitful earth : by whose conceiving, all
That lives doth leap into the light o' the sun :
Thee, Goddess, thee, at thine approach, the winds
Flee, and the skyeey clouds : the dœdal earth
To thee her flow'rets sweet uprears : to thee
The waters wide of Ocean laugh, and all
The stainless heaven in full-poured light is clear.
Soon as the vernal forehead of the day
Unveiled appears, what time the procreant gale
Of free Favonius nimbly breathes abroad,
Thee, Goddess, and thy comings, thrilled at heart
By thy strong sweetness, first the aëry birds
Herald ; and then, their happy haunts about,
The wild herds bound, and swim the torrent brooks.

So taken by delight of thy sweet lures
 With fond desire, the life of all that lives
 To follow thee, where'er thou wilt, is fain ;
 Till last, amid the seas, among the hills,
 And by the flowing of the headlong streams,
 Green grassy lawns, and leafy homes of birds,
 In every breast implanting balmy love,
 Each, in his several kind, thou dost constrain
 With lusty heart life's ages to renew.

Sole, who dost universal nature sway,
 Since without thee may never aught arise
 Into the regions of celestial light,
 Nor lovely aught, nor aught delightful be,
 Thee my divine associate I desire
 In verses yet unwritten, to reveal
 THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE OF THINGS,
 Which now I meditate for Memmius' son,
 Memmius my friend ; whom, Goddess, thou hast
 willed,
 Gifted in all, at all times to excel.
 So much the more, Divine Inspirer, grant
 Enduring sweetness to these words of mine :
 And lull, meanwhile, war's barbarous business all
 To slumbrous rest the lands and seas around :
 For thou alone our mortal hearts canst help
 With hushful peace. Since Mars armipotent,
 That over war's wild labors lorddom wields,
 Oft in thy lap, by love's eternal wound
 O'ermastered, flings himself ; and, gazing up
 (His full firm-moulded throat back-sloped at ease),
 Into his soul thy sweetness there he breathes,
 There feeds on love his famisht looks, the while,
 His sighed-forth spirit upon thy lip doth hang.

O'er him, so leaning, as thy sacred form,
 O Goddess, all its fluent beauty bends,
 Pour from thy lips a language of soft sounds,
 And for thy Romans, O Renowned, beseech
 Untroubled peace. For, neither may we hope
 With even mind, in this uneven hour
 That shakes the land, our purpose to pursue,
 Nor Memmius' noble scion, in a time
 So tossed, be wanting to the common weal.

For what remains, to me, O Memmius, lend
 Thine ears' free listening; and, from cares with-
 drawn,
 Thyself to truth's pure argument address.
 Nor yet, despised ere comprehended, spurn
 My gifts, for thee, with studious zeal, disposed.
 For of the supreme order of the spheres,
 The gods, and Nature's primal sources all,
 Discourse with thee I purpose; and to show
 Whence Nature all things doth to being bring,
 Put forth, and nourish; whither, also, she
 Anon, dissolving, doth restore them all.
 These, in the rendering of our argument,
 Matter, we call; the elemental seeds
 And generative substances of things;
 Naming them primal; since all things that are
 From these, the first, derivatively come.

For all the being of the gods must needs,
 Of its own nature, perfect peace enjoy,
 Living immortally, far off removed
 From all this coil of sublunary things:
 Exempt from peril, from all pain exempt,
 Itself to itself sufficing, and of us

Naught needing, neither by the good, nor ill
Men do, disposed to favor or to wrath.


What time man's life before his own eyes lay
Low grovelling, ground to earth beneath the weight
Of grim Religion, that from cloudy air
Her lifted head in heaven put forth, and stood
High over men with horrible countenance,
A man in Greece, then first of all mankind,
Dared to uplift, against her, mortal eyes,
And, fearless fronting, firm withstand her. Him
Nor rumors of the gods, nor thunder-bolts,
Nor heaven with muttering menace, could dismay,
But rather all the more within him roused
Sharp courage, and the yearning of his soul
To be the first to shatter the shut bars
Of Nature's portals. Therefore, his soul's strength
Prevailed : and he, in high procedure, far
O'erpassed the wide world's burning boundary walls,
And traversed in the spirit and the thought
The vast immeasurable infinite.
Thence, now, triumphant, he to us reports
What may be ; what may not be ; what, in fine,
Is the capacity of all things ; what
The bound abysmal. Whence, in turn, brought
 down
And trodden 'neath our feet Religion writhes.
Us level with heaven's height his victory sets.

DANTE.

THE FIRST CANTO OF THE INFERNO.

PARAPHRASE.

(*In terza rima.*)

PON the journey of our life midway
Methought that, from the right path
 strayed, I stood
In a wood obscure. Full hard it is to say
How savage, rough, and stubborn was that
wood :

Whereof such dread as death can scarce excel
My thought renews. But, to set forth the good
Which there I found, I needs must also tell

What other things I did encounter there.
Into this wood how me the chance befell
To enter, memory may not well declare,

So full of slumber was I at that place
Whence, leaving the true path, I wandered here.
But, soon as I had neared a mountain's base,

Whereby the vale subsided, that with fear
My heart had pierced, I, lifting up my face,
Beheld his shoulders in the rays, now clear,

Of that full planet robed, which pilots right
Man's every path. Whereat, were quieted
A little the long stirrings of affright

That in the hollow of my heart were bred
By the so piteous passage of the night.

And even as one that, with back-turned head,
When up from out of ocean 'scaped to shore,
Pants, and the perilous deep doth wistful scan,
So turned my spirit, flying still, to explore

That pass yet never left by living man.
Anon, athwart the wilderness, once more

I, after rest of wearied limbs, began
To foot the upward path ; where of my feet
The one firm-set was lowest all the way.

And lo, a lithe she-leopard, passing fleet,
With fur of many colors coated gay,
Hard by the upslope ! Nor would she retreat
Thenceforth from sight, but round my path did
play

Till oft I turned with purpose back to fare.
It was the season when the morning springs,

And now, amid the stars that with him were
When Love Divine first moved those beauteous
things,

The sun was rising. Hope the happy air,
The season sweet, and gay apparellings

Of that bright beast inspired : yet 't was not so
With me, but what my hope was made worse dread
By vision of what seemed a lion, who

Against me came with high-uplifted head,
And all so hunger-mad, 't was even as though
Air's self the awe of him disquieted.

Therewith a she-wolf, that did look to be
Stuffed in her leanness with all lusts ; and, long
Erenow, with miseries manifold hath she

Made lean the life of many a mortal throng.
 So huge a heaviness she cast on me,
 Wrought from her aspect fierce, of fear so
 strong,
 That of the height all hope I lost. As one,
 Glad of his getting, when to him is nigh
 The time that takes it from him, maketh
 moan
 With all his being's might, even so was I,
 In such a sudden sorrow so far gone ;
 By that unpeaceable beast continually
 Tormented ; which, sore baffling me, at last
 Little by little drove me backward where
 The sun is silent. There, down running
 fast,
 Nigh to the nether space, my sense was ware
 Of one before me in the wildness vast,
 That, for long silence, seemed faint-voiced.
 To him,
 Soon as I saw him, " Pity me ! " I cried,
 " Whate'er thou beest, true man, or shadow dim."
 " No man ; but what was once man," he re-
 plied.
 " Lombards were my begetters, both of them,
 And Mantuans they, by country, either side.
 Myself *sub Julio* born, though late, at Rome
 Beneath benign Augustus dwelt, i' the day
 Of feigned and fabling gods. Poet, him come
 From Troy, just offspring of Anchises gray,
 When burned was Ilium, once his haughty home,
 I sung. But thou, why dost thou rather, say,
 To perils such return, than scale yon mount

Delightful, source and cause of every bliss ?”

“O art thou Virgil, and indeed that fount

Whence such full flow of utterance streams ?”
to this

I, with shamed forehead, answered, “Thee I count
The light and honor of all song that is !

Requite me my much love, and study slow,
That me to search thy volume have constrained.

Thou art my master, and my maker thou,

Thou only he of whom I have obtained
That style whose beauty me makes honored now !
Behold what beast compels me leave ungained

That height ! O famed for wisdom, from her
paw

That shakes my veins and pulses, save me !” He,
Soon as the weeping of my woe he saw,

Made response to me, “Other pathway thee
Behoooves it to attempt, if from the jaw
Of this wild desert thou thyself wouldst free.

She against whom thou clamorest, that she-
beast,

Lets no man pass her, but doth all impede
Even to the death. The greed of whose grim
breast

So curséd is, not anything can feed
Her ravenous lust, which, ever after feast,
Worse famine than before doth in her breed.

Many the beasts wherewith she couples be,
And many more they shall be, till arrive
That Greyhound which shall pine her heart, till
she

Wretchedly perish. Not by land shall live,

Nor yet by lucre, but by wisdom, he,
 And love and virtue. And his folk shall thrive
 'Twixt either Feltro. He shall lift on high
 That so-low-fallen Italy for whose sake
 Maiden Camilla in time past did die,
 Euryalus, Nisus, Turnus ; and shall make
 From his pursuing through all cities fly
 Back into Hell her that Hell's bound to break
 Hate first impelled. I, therefore, for thy good
 Considering, thee now counsel and commend
 To follow me. And I, from out this wood
 Thy guide will be, with whom thou mayest
 wend
 That everlasting deep where dwells the brood
 Of those whose desperate shrieks thine ears shall
 rend,
 And gaze on spirits of the former time.
 In dole, demanding second death ; then who,
 Content, in fire endure, with hope to climb
 Hereafter, whensoever time be due,
 To the beatified ; whose blissful clime
 If thou to visit then aspirest too,
 Unto that end another spirit shall be ;
 Worthier than I ; to whose high ministering
 Thee will I, then departing, leave. For me
 He that above hath empire and is king
 Holds rebel to his law, and doth decree
 That by my means shall none have entering
 Into his state. He in all parts hath sway,
 But there his throne is, there his palace high,
 There doth he chiefly dwell. O happy they
 Whom there he chooses !”
 And to him, then I,

“O poet, by that God that in thy day
Thou didst not know (this ill and worse to fly)
I charge thee, lead me where thou said'st,
aright ;
That I may see Saint Peter's Gate, and those
That, by thy showing, be in such sad plight.”
Onward he moved ; and I behind him close.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINO.

PARAPHRASE.

(*Fifth Canto of the Inferno.*)



WHEN of my Teacher I had learned the
 names
 Of those renowned knights of other
 days,
 And theirs, the former time's most famous dames,
 Lost in sad wonder, after mute amaze,
 "Bard," I began, "much is my heart inclined
 To parley with yon twain that, where I gaze,
 Seem coming, borne so light upon the wind."
 And he to me: "Their nearer neighboring note;
 Then, by the love that moves them, thus en-
 twined,
 Charge them, and they will come." No sooner
 smote
 The swift gust near us, which those spirits, joined,
 Did simultaneous to our sight upfloat,
 Than, moved to utterance, "Come! O come,"
 I cried,
 "Afflicted souls! nor yet to our inquiring
 Deny discourse, if by naught else denied,"
 As doves, solicited by fond desiring,
 To their loved nest, on steady wings and wide,
 Through air are wafted by the sweet inspiring
 Of their own wishes swift; so, parting there

Dido's dim throng, the twain toward us sailed
 In such wise speeding through that evil air ;
 So much my cry compassionate prevailed.

" O being that, beneficent and fair,
 Through this obscure comest, visiting," they wailed,
 " Us that have earth embrued with bloody
 stain,

Were he, the Universal King, our friend,
 Since thou hast pity on our pitiless pain,
 Prayers to him we for thy peace would send.

Whate'er to hear, or haply tell, thou art fain,
 To tell or hear, thy bidding we attend,
 What time, as now, the wind is whist. The
 land

That bore me seaward lies where Po proceeds
 Down, with his sequent waters, to his rest.
 Love, that in gentle heart scant kindling
 breeds,

Him, by the fairness of the form that drest
 This spirit once (and yet indignant bleeds
 Sharp memory of its taking off!) possess ;

Love, that in one beloved doth love beget,
 Me too well pleased with pleasing him, so well
 That, as thou seest, he hath not left me yet :

Love led us to one death : Caïna's hell
 Waits him that spilt our lives." Such response
 met

My sense, from such resentful sorrowing sent,
 That so long, for the sadness of it, was
 My countenance in such dejection bent,
 The Poet cried, " What musest thou !"
 " Alas ! "

I answered, "What sweet thoughts, what fond intent

Have brought them to this miserable pass!"

Then, yet once more returning to the two,

"Francesca, pitifullest tears," I cried,

"For thy deep woes I weep. Yet tell me how

To him and thee did Love the means provide,

First in the time of your sweet sighs, to know

Your yet uncertain wishes?" She replied,

"There is no greater pang than to recall

In misery days of happiness that were.

And that thy Teacher knows. Yet I, if all

So deep be thy desire to see laid bare

Of our love's growth the root original,

Will speak as one that weeping tells his care.

For pleasant passing of the time, one day,

Of love-thralled Launcelot the tale we read:

We were alone: all danger far away

From our suspecting: though the color fled

Our faces oft, and oft our looks to stray

Into each other's eyes that reading led.

One point alone o'ercame us. We the while

Thus reading still, still unsuspecting ever,

When as we read of that so longed-for smile

That such deep love did, with such dear endeavor,

To so sweet kissing of sweet lips beguile,

He that from me shall be departed never

Me on the mouth all trembling kist. Accurst

The felon book was, and its scribe as well ! *
That day we read no more.

While thus the first,

The other spirit made moan so miserable
That, by sick pity all my sense disperst,
Down, as to earth a dead corpse falls, I fell."

* "*Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse.*"

Those commentators who affirm that the *Galeotto* of this line is the proper name of GALAHAD are probably right. They have, at least, ample warrant for their opinion in the sixty-sixth chapter of the Italian Romance of Lancelotto, relating "*Come la Reina conobbe Lancelotto . . . e come la prima congiunzione fu fatta fra Lancelotto e Ginevra per lo mezzo di Galeotto.*" The obvious sense of the passage is that both the book and its author were go-betweens. But, although the go-between of the Italian Romance is called Galahad, — a name which probably was to Dante's Italian contemporaries (as that of Shakespeare's Pandarus was, and is, to Englishmen) a synonym for pimp, yet, in any case, the force of Dante's supposed allusion to him would be lost upon English readers who cannot associate the memory of the "Virgin Knight" with the ignoble character and functions ascribed to the Galahad of the Italian tale. For this reason I am content to take the simple, common meaning of the word *galeotto*, viz., a felon, — a scoundrel, — the French *galérien*. Mr. Cary, indeed, translates the line thus : —

"The book and writer both were love's purveyors" ;

but this euphuistic paraphrase appears to me to convey no sense of the denunciatory intensity of Francesca's abrupt and startling exclamation. There is a dramatic effect in the angry suddenness with which the narrator of the tragedy breaks off her narration by an implied curse, just at the point where the situation she is describing was broken into, and abruptly ended, by a crime : and I think it little matters how you translate this word *galeotto*, so long as you retain unimpaired the imprecatory force which it gives to the whole passage.

O. M.

MICHELAGNOLO BUONARROTI.

SONNETS AND MADRIGALS.

IMITATED.

THE BIRTH OF LOVE.



KNOW not if, in waking dream, or sleep,
His light, that made her, on my soul
hath shined ;
Or if from out the memory or the mind
Aught else of brightness, poured, my spirit doth
steep.

Perchance within me some late beam I keep
Of Heaven's original glory left behind ;
Some smouldering sense of scarce I know what
kind
Of sweetest pain ; whence I perforce must weep.

Not of myself, nor can I well declare
Whence, is the power that in me moves, and
guides
My dazzled heart through every new surprise.

But, since I saw you, lady, thus I fare,
Whom bitter sweet with yes and no divides.
Doubtless 't is all the doing of your eyes,

LOVE VINDICATED.



ALL it not impious crime, nor mortal
sin,
That noble love that mighty Beauty
excites

In him whose softly-opening heart invites
Some beam of holier light to enter in.

Love wakes and moves ; and plumes his wings to
win

His upward goal. And oft the soul, that slights
Her earthly home, to Heaven's ancestral heights
Doth, by his ardor lured, her flight begin.

The love that speaks of thee aspires on high,
Nor feebly burns nor falters. To obey
A baser passion my true heart were shamed.

True Love for Heaven, as Lust for Earth, doth
sigh :

This doth the soul, that doth the senses, sway :
And at ignoble mark his bow is aimed.

MADRIGALS.

I.



E, though unbound yet free in vain,
 What fetter binds and brings to thee ?
 If sight of thee, with unseen chain,
 Can fetter those thyself wouldst free,
 What power have I those eyes to flee
 Whose warm desire
 The darts of Love hath dipt in fire ?

II.

Why memory of those eyes, and the dear hope
 Whereby I live not only, but am blest,
 From hour to hour do all my days beguile,
 Demand the cause, wherewith in vain I cope,
 Of Love, and Nature, that allow no rest,
 And the fond wont that mine hath been long
 while
 With all life's hours to pile
 Love's monument to thee.
 Life soon were death, could life no longer see
 Your light, sweet eyes :
 For all my life is by your light begot,
 And soon it dies
 If banisht, after birth, to any spot
 Unsweetened by the light that in you lies.

III.

How is it, that I am mine no more ?
 Who from myself hath banisht me ?

Who in myself more seems to be
At home, than was myself before ?
How hath it happ'd, that I should miss
The moment when she slipped so slyly
Into my heart ? and what is this,
This wistful love, that through the eyes
Into the soul doth steal so shyly,
And, there grown bold and wanton, tries
A thousand ways of exit wily ?

IV.

If, here, in sculptured stone,
Whereto erewhile did Art her form consign,
That form, while years roll on,
May live, O what with her sweet self, — divine
Not to mine only, but all mortal sight, —
By Heaven shall then be done ?
Since she Heaven's making is ; this marble, merely
mine !
Yet must she fade, and follow Time's brief flight ;
And all her beauty is but hers in spite,
If Death, that takes her life, the dead stone spare.
What shall repair
This wrong to Nature done by Time's disdain,
If, while her son's works stay, her own be ta'en ?

V.

While, to the call of Time, my days fleet fast,
Love still disputes Time's power,
Nor will forego one hour
That's owed him yet, despite the long years past.
My soul, that groans and cries
As one that, injured, dies,

430 *IMITATIONS AND PARAPHRASES.*

Laments in me my better life downcast.

'Twixt what to bless and blast

Hath power, — 'twixt Death and Love,

Dubious, my vext heart strove

To choose the best, yet doth it hug the worst.

Thus by bad custom is good counsel curst.

CANZONE.



OW doth life's flame burn down, and
faint, in me,
Fast as from fallen thunder fades away
The fluttering fire that winged his ar-
dent flight.

Love, all thine ancient hurts I pardon thee ;
But my faint heart, where chilled thy hot darts
stay,
Deep wounded once, doth no new wounds in-
vite.

If all thy fires these languid eyes could light,
The worn-out heart would not rekindle now
Its long-quenched glow.

Wherefore I shun thee, Love, in self-disdain ;
Too weak a wearying war to wage again.

Me, by new beauty, wouldst thou, haply, lure
Back to the perilous pass, my dull desire,
Warned by old woes, will now no more essay ?
Worst are those ills which later years endure :
And I should be as ice before the fire,
That doth not kindle, but dissolves away.
Death, from the danger of my later day
Sole saviour now, must pluck me from the harm
Of thy fierce arm,
That, working woe by sight of others' weal,
Still strives to whirl a long-arrested wheel.

My soul, with whom Death parleys, doth prepare,
Taking cold counsel of herself, within

Sad shade of solemn thoughts that neighbor night,
 This body soon to leave behind her, where
 Her ghostly journey must, erelong, begin ;
 Which mingled hope and fear but dimly light.
 Ah, Love ! how fierce thou standest, full in sight
 Of my sad eyes ; strong-armed, from me to rend,
 What me defend,
 These timely thoughts of Death ; that thy wild
 hours
 May from a withered tree snatch leaves and flow-
 ers !

What can I more ? What owe I thee ? My debt
 Is paid in full. More hours can he afford
 Whose past's whole wealth thy greedy garner
 stocks ?

What craft or what compulsion back may get
 To thee my homage gone, ungenerous lord,
 Who mak'st the pain thy seeming pity mocks ?
 The soul that hath undone her dungeon locks,
 And loosed her bonds, knows better than again
 To hug her chain,
 And all her new-found freedom, fooled, forego
 His service to resume, that wrought her woe.

Whatever earth brings forth earth takes again :
 And more and more all mortal beauty fleets :
 Who loves (and this know I) is never free :
 Near neighbor is great pleasure to great pain :
 And most by those that deepest drain the sweets
 The bitters in life's chalice tasted be.
 O tyrant Love, what is thy will of me ?
 Wilt thou that I, oblivious of past ill,
 Be thy fool still,

While the scant time, my near departure claims,
Be spent by thee on sorrows and on shames ?

Go, song of mine, from ice by fire begot !
And haply if Love meet thee by the way,
 Bid him delay
To war with one that challenges him not :
Tell him, he wins no glory by the blow
That smites a long-already-fallen foe.

RONSARD.

SONNETS AND CHANSONS.

PARAPHRASES.

I.

“Voici le bois que ma sainte Angelette.”



HERE is the wood that freshened to her
song :

See here the flowers that keep her foot-
prints yet :

Where, all alone, my saintly Angelette
Went wandering with her maiden thoughts along :

Here is the little rivulet where she stopped :

And here the greenness of the grass shows
where

She lingered through it, searching here and there
Those daisies dear which in her breast she dropped :

Here did she sing : and here she wept : and here
Her smile came back : and there I seem to hear

Those faint half-words wherewith my heart is
rife :

There did she sit : there childlike did she dance
To some vague impulse of her own romance.

Ah, Love on all these thoughts unwinds my life !

II.

“ Cache pour cest nuict.”

HIDE for a night thy horn, good Moon ! Fair fortune
 For this shall keep Endymion ever prest
 Deep-dreaming amorous on thine argent breast,
 Nor ever shall enchanter thee importune.

Hateful to me the day: most sweet the night !
 I fear the myriad meddling eyes of day :
 But courage comes with night. Close, close, I
 pray,
 Your curtains, dear dark skies, on my delight !

Thou, too, thou Moon, thou too hast felt love’s
 power !
 Pan with a white fleece won thee for an hour.
 And you, sidereal signs in yonder blue,
 Favor the fire whereby my heart is moved !
 Forget not, signs, the greater part of you
 Was only set in heaven for having loved.

III.

“ Page suy moy.”

FOLLOW, my Page, where the green grass em-
 bosoms
 The enamelled season’s freshest-fallen dew :
 Then home, and my still house with handfuls
 strew
 Of frail-lived April’s newlied-nurtured blossoms.
 Take from the wall, now, my song-tuned lyre.
 Here will I sit, and charm out the sweet pain

436 IMITATIONS AND PARAPHRASES.

Of a dark eye whose light hath burned my brain,
The unloving loveliness of my desire !

And here mine ink, and here my papers, place :
A hundred pages white, whereon to trace
A hundred words of desultory woe :
Words which shall last like graven diamonds sure,
That some day hence a future race may know,
And ponder on, the pain that I endure.

IV.

“ Les espics sont à Ceres.”

CERES hath her harvests sweet :
Chloris hath the young green grass :
Woods for Fauns with cloven feet :
His green laurel Phoebus has :
Minerva hath her olive tree :
And the pine 's for Cybele.

Sweet sounds are for Zephyr's wings :
Sweet fruit for Pomona's bosom :
For the Nymphs are crystal springs :
And for Flora bud and blossom :
But sighings, weepings, sad ideas,
These alone are Cytherea's.

V.

“ Ma douce jeunesse.”

My sweet youth now is all done :
The strength and the beauty are gone :
The tooth now is black : and the head now is white :

And the nerves now are loosed : in the veins
 Only water (not blood now) remains
 Where the pulse beat of old with delight.

Adieu ! O my lyre ! O adieu
 You sweet women, my lost loves ! and you,
 Each dead passion ! The end creepeth nigher.
 Not one pastime of youth has kept pace
 With my age : naught is left in their place
 But the bed, and the cup, and the fire.

My head is confused with low fears,
 And sickness, and too many years,
 Some care in each corner I meet.
 And wherever I linger, or go,
 I turn back, and look after, to know
 If Death be still dogging my feet :

Dogging me down the dark stair
 That windeth, I cannot tell where,
 To some Pluto, that opens forever
 His cave to all comers : alas,
 How easily down it all pass,
 And return from it — never, ah never !

DANISH.



Und wenn ein Irrlicht euch die Wege weisen sol,
So müst ihr's so genau nicht nehmen.

THE ELVES.

IMITATIONS.

1.



STRETCHING the tired limbs over the
ground,
Laying the head o'er the Elfin Mound,
Seemed I, or dreamed I, to hear and to
see
Two milk-white maidens come lightly to me,
So lightly to me?
I saw them but once : I shall see them no more.
Dreaming is o'er.

2.

Two milk-white maidens : two little elf-girls :
One of them kist me under the curls :
One of them whispered me warm in the ear,
"Up, and dance with us ! the moon shines clear
On mountain and mere."
I saw them but once : I shall see them no more.
Dreaming is o'er.

3.

“And look ! and my sisters shall glance the sweet
glances :
And rise ! and my sisters shall dance the sweet
dances :
And list ! and my sisters shall sing the sweet songs.”
And the Elves of the forest came round me in throngs,
 Around me in throngs !
I saw them but once : I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o’er.

4.

And a marvellous music in air was heard,
And voices neither of breeze nor bird :
And the torrent, that never before stood still,
Stopped all at once of his own wild will
 On the windy hill.
I saw them but once : I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o’er.

5.

The torrent, that never before was at rest,
Stilled every beat of his bubbling breast :
And the little white delicate fishes all
Danced, dimpling the diamond waterfall
 That stood like a wall.
I saw them but once : I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o’er.

6.

The little sly fishes with silvery tails
Paddled and played : and the nightingales

And all the sweet things that live in the air
 Sang aloud down the valleys, and everywhere
 Through the moonlight fair.
 I saw them but once: I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o'er.

7.

“And wilt thou be of us? and wilt thou be ours?
 We will play thee strange music, and ply thee
 strange powers:
 Dance thee sweet dances, and sing thee sweet tunes:
 And teach thee to read and to write the great runes
 That charm stars and moons.”
 I saw them but once: I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o'er.

8.

“And that dreaming dragon, that sleepeth, rolled
 Fold over fold, on a heap of red gold,
 Shall lift up the eyelid from over the eye,
 And sleepily see thee, and, seeing thee, fly
 To the desert, and die.”
 I saw them but once: I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o'er.

9.

Round the elfin ring did the music flow:
 And they dancéd high, and they dancéd low.
 I watched them, drooping an eyelid bland,
 But grasping the glaive in the wary hand,
 Not trusting the band.
 I saw them but once: I shall see them no more.
 Dreaming is o'er.

10.

And, "Hearest thou? fearest thou, fool, to feel
pleasure?

Delayest thou? weighest thou mirth with a meas-
ure?

We will give thee quick riddance: long rest from
all strife;

And cut off the cares that encumber thy life
With a sharp, sharp knife."

I saw them but once: I shall see them no more.

Dreaming is o'er.

11.

If the cock had not crowed at that moment so shrill,
And the red dawn flickered far off on the hill,

Which sent them all flitting, by tens and twelves,
I might have been there with them yet, and the Elves

Had my soul to themselves.

But I saw them once only, and saw them no more.

Dreaming is o'er.

12.

Thou, that ridest by night over elfin ground,
Lay not the head on the Elfin Mound.

And let not the eyelid sink over the eye:

For the Elves are fair: and the Elves are sly:

And a man might die.

Once only I saw them: I see them no more.

Dreaming is o'er.

LORD OLAF.

PART I.

1.



O the merry wedding feast to bid the
wedding guest,
Light, Lord Olaf, unespied, in the mid-
dle night doth ride :
But the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

2.

O the merry, merry wives ! fair they dance by fours
and fives :
But the Elf Queen of them all . . . he hath heard
the Elf Queen call,
And the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
While the white women dance in the wild wood.

3.

“ Hail, Lord Olaf, to the dance ! while the moon
is in a trance,
And the shade is on the tree, get thee down and
dance with me,
For the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.”

4.

“Nay, nay,” he answered, — “nay, I may neither
list nor stay :

For to-morrow, O to-morrow is my merry marriage
day.”

But the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,

And the white women dance in the wild wood.

5.

“List, Lord Olaf ! an’ ye will dance with me by
yonder hill,

Ye shall have a sark of silk, soft as sleep and white
as milk.”

And the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,

And the white women dance in the wild wood.

6.

“Hist ! a silken sark snow-white : for my mother
bleached it bright

In the mad moonlight, in the middle of the night.”

O the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,

And the white women dance in the wild wood.

7.

“Nay, I may no more delay ; neither list to what
ye say :

For to-morrow, for to-morrow is my merry marriage
day.”

But the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,

And the white women dance in the wild wood.

8.

“List, Lord Olaf! an’ with me ye will dance by
yonder tree,
Ye shall have a scarf of gold broidered bright on
scarlet fold.”
And the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

9.

“Take the golden scarf away! I may neither look
nor stay :
For to-morrow, O to-morrow, is my merry marriage
day.”
But the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

10.

“Hist, Lord Olaf! scarlet fold, broidered gay with
burning gold :
For I wrought it in the cold of the caverned hills
of old.”
O the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

11.

“Keep, O keep the silken sark, and the golden
scarf! for hark,
From the far-off forest dells comes a sound of bri-
dal bells!”

But the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

12.

“An’ ye will not dance with me, list, Lord Olaf,
ye shall be
Fairest bridegroom ever borne to his grave on bri-
dal morn.”
Ho ! the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

13.

Light she leapt to his red horse : “Now ride on
across the gorse !
“Ride !” she cried, “Not every bride clasps a dead
man to her side !”
And the dance flies fast through the hollow, hollow
wood,
And the white women dance in the wild wood.

PART II.

1.



PALE, Lord Olaf stood before his own
good castle door,
And his mother from the gate called,
“Lord Olaf, why so late?”
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold!

2.

“And, Lord Olaf, do ye ail: Why, son Olaf,
why so pale?
For thy cheek is white as death, and there’s blood
upon the heath.”
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold!

3.

“Mother, mother, much I ail; and my cheek may
well be pale.
Evil, evil was the chance! I have seen the Elf
Queen dance.
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, whose kissing is
so cold!”

4.

“Hold! what say ye, O my son? and what is it
ye have done?
And what shall I tell thy bride?” “Tell her, tell
her that I ride,”
(O Elf Queen, O Elf Queen, thy kissing is so
cold!)

5.

“ That I ride around, around in the forest, with
my hound :
In the forest through the gorse, to try my red roan
horse.”
But the Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is
so cold !

6.

Blithely blows the castle horn for the merry mar-
riage morn :
And the silver music swells from the swinging
bridal bells.
But the Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is
so cold !

7.

Come the minstrels : comes the priest : with the
merry wedding guest :
And the bride with the bride-maiden ; and the
banquet board is laden.
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

8.

And the hydromel is poured, and the red wine,
round the board.
“ Mother, mother, where is he that should be here
with me ? ”
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

9.

“O he rides around, around in the forest with his
hound;
In the forest, through the gorse with his greyhound
and his horse.”
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

10.

“Nay, his horse is in the stall, and his greyhound
in the hall :
And O, dear as these may be, more Lord Olaf
loveth me !”
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

11.

“Long his horse may stand in stall, and his grey-
hound bide in hall :
Weary men do slumber deep : and he lieth in a
sleep.”
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

12.

Then the scarlet cloth she raised, and upon his
face they gazed :
And fear fell upon them all, the feasters in that
hall.
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

13.

“O maiden, maiden, weep ! He that sleepeth such
a sleep
Needeth but a narrow bed !” Not a word the
maiden said.
The Elf Queen, the Elf Queen, her kissing is so
cold !

14.

On the mournful morrow morn three corpses forth
were borne :
From the castle corpses three : and two were fair
to see.
O Elf Queen, O Elf Queen, thy kissing is so cold !




SERVIAN.

Omne meum : nihil meum.



NOTE.

HEN the following poems were first published, they were criticised in the *Saturday Review* by a writer than whom there are probably few Europeans more thoroughly conversant with the languages, the literature, and the social life of the East ; and for whom I entertain too sincere a respect to neglect this opportunity of endeavoring to remove from his mind a misapprehension, occasioned (much to my regret) by the unintentional ambiguity of my own language.

Assuming, from some words in a short preface, by which the first edition of them was accompanied, that these verses were offered to the public as a translation of songs orally collected by myself from the wandering singers of them in Servia, my critic proceeded (and, I must add, very courteously) to protest against a pretension which I had certainly no intention whatever of putting forward in their behalf.

These ballads, as was stated in the preface to which I refer, are neither Translations nor Paraphrases. Strictly speaking, indeed, I cannot prop-

erly call them even Imitations; for they attempt neither the imitation of Servian metres, nor the treatment of subject in purely Servian forms, nor even the faithful expression of purely Servian sentiment. In fact, they represent nothing more than the result of a passing wish to embody in forms of my own the personal impressions made upon myself by the popular poetry of a people amongst whom I was living when they were written. In the preface alluded to, reference was made to the French prose translation of Servian ballads and legends (from which the subjects of these verses are taken) in the work of M. Dozon: to the privilege of whose personal intercourse, no less than to his interesting book, I am indeed greatly indebted for information about a country in which he has long resided; although, in the composition of these versions of Servian song, I also received assistance from others of my acquaintance in that country.

But in that unlucky preface it was said of these verses, that, "whether weeds or wild-flowers, they had, at least, been gathered upon native soil." And it is to this not very original figure of speech — occurring, as it did, immediately after a description of the blind bards of Servia, and the mode in which the traditions of their race are preserved by the songs they sing — that I must attribute the misfortune of having conveyed to the mind of my accomplished critic an impression that I intended to pass off my own verses as derived from original sources, and translated by myself from the recitation of those singers. I am sorry for it. I intended nothing of the kind. All I meant to imply was, that my verses had been prompted, and

were characterized, by the local influences of a period passed in contemplation of much of the scenery to which they often refer, and in personal contact with the people from whose history, habits, and sentiments the subjects of them are derived. In short, the publication of these ballads was occasioned only by a belief that the freshness of impressions, thus directly received, might possibly have imparted to them some of the qualities which ought to be found in original verse. There is a merit which belongs to accurate translation, and there is a merit which belongs to spirited paraphrase. I presume to think, however, that there is also another kind of merit (belonging neither to the one nor the other) in the vividness with which a writer may succeed in imparting to the minds of his readers sensations added to the stock of his own individuality by contact with a literature embodying the thoughts and fancies of an experience unfamiliar to himself and to his countrymen. It is the attainment of this kind of merit which is here aimed at. Goethe, indeed, who probably knew nothing of Servian, has left us a version of one of these very ballads : and Goethe's version has a merit and an interest of its own, as an original work, notwithstanding the fact that it was composed from an Italian translation. Goethe was never in Servia, nor could any personal knowledge of that country be needed by so great an artist as Goethe, either to prompt, or justify, the annexation of any province of Servian Song to his literary domains. For myself, however, I confess that if I had never been in Servia these verses would never have been written, and should

they succeed in conveying to the sense of any reader of them something of the novelty of those impressions which induced me to write them, they will have sufficiently accomplished the object of their author.

OWEN MEREDITH.





THE BATTLE OF KOSSOVO.

I.



HE Sultan Murad o'er Kossovo comes
With banners and drums.

There, all in characters fair,
He wrote a letter ; and there
Bade his estaffettes despatch
To bear it to Krouchevatch,
To the white-walled town of the Tzar,
To the hands of Prince Lazar.
“ Listen, Lazarus, chief of the Serbs, to me !
That which never hath been, that which never shall
be,
Is that two lords one land should sway,
And the same rayas two tributes pay.
Send to me, therefore, the tributes and keys ;
The golden keys of each white town ;
And send me a seven years' tribute with these.
But if this thou wilt not do,
Then come thou down over Kossovo :
On the field of Kossovo come thou down,
That we may divide the land with our swords.
These are my words.”

When Lazarus this letter had read,
Bitter, bitter were the tears he shed.

II.

A gray bird, a falcon, comes flying apace
From Jerusalem, from the Holy Place;
And he bears a light swallow abroad.
It is not a gray bird, a falcon, God wot!
But the Saint Elias; and it is not
A light swallow he bears from afar,
But a letter from the Mother of God
To the Tzar who in Kossovo stays.
And the letter is dropt on the knees of the
Tzar;
And these are the words that it says:—

“Lazarus, Prince of a race that I love,
Which empire choosest thou?
That of the heaven above?
Or that of the earth below?
If thou choose thee an earthly realm,
Saddle horse, belt, spur, and away!
Warriors, bind ye both sabre and helm,
And rush on the Turks, and they
With their army whole shall perish.
But, if rather a heavenly crown thou cherish,
At Kossovo build ye a temple fair.
There no foundations of marble lay,
But only silk of the scarlet dye.
Range ye the army in battle-array,
And let each and all full solemnly
Partake of the blessed sacrament there.
For then of a certainty know
Ye shall utterly perish, both thou,
And thine army all; and the Turk shall be
Lord of the land that is under thee.”

When the Tzar he read these words,
His thoughts were as long and as sharp as swords.
“ God of my fathers, what shall I choose ?
If a heavenly empire, then must I lose
All that is dearest to me upon earth ;
But if that the heavenly here I refuse,
What then is the earthly worth ?
It is but a day,
It passeth away,
And the glory of earth full soon is o’er,
And the glory of God is more and more.”

“ What is this world’s renown ? ”
(His heart was heavy, his soul was stirred.)
“ Shall an earthly empire be preferred
To an everlasting crown ?
At Kossovo build me a temple fair :
Lay no foundations of marble down,
But only silk of the scarlet dye.”
Then he sent for the Servian Patriarch :
With him twelve bishops to Kossovo went.
It was at the lifting of the dark :
They ranged the army in battle-array,
And the army all full solemnly
Received the blessed sacrament,
And hardly was this done, when lo !
The Turks came rushing on Kossovo.

III.

Ivan Kossantchitch, my probratime,
What of the Turk ? How deem ye of him ?
Is he strong, is he many, is he near ?
Our battle, say ! may we show him ?

May we hope to overthrow him ?
What news of him bringest thou here ?

And Ivan Kossantchitch replied :
“ Milosch Obilitch, my brother dear,
I have lookt on the Turk in his pride.
He is strong, he is many, he is near,
His tents are on every side.
Were we all of us hewn into morsels, and salted,
Hardly, I think, should we salt him his meat.
Two whole days have I journeyed, nor halted,
Toward the Turk, near the Turk, round him, and
never
Could I number his numbers, or measure his end.
From the Maple to Sazlia, brother, my feet
Have wandered ; from Sazlia round by the river,
Where the river comes round to the bridge with a
bend ;
And over the bridge to the town of Zvétchan ;
From Zvétchan to Tchéchan, and farther, and ever
Farther, and over the mountains, wherever
Foot may fall, or eye may scan,
I saw naught but the Mussulman.

“ Eastward and westward, and southward and
nor’ward,
Scaling the hillside, and scathing the gorse,
Horseman to horseman, and horse against horse ;
Lances like forests when forests are black ;
Standards like clouds flying backward and forward,
White tents like snowdrifts piled up at the back.
The rain may, in torrents, fall down out of heaven,
But never the earth will it reach :
Nothing but horsemen, nothing but horses,

Thick as the sands which the wild river courses
Leave, after tempest, in heaps on the beach.
Murad, for pasture, hath given
To his horsemen the plain of Mazguite.
Lances a-ripple all over the land,
Tost like the bearded and billowy wheat
By the winds of the mountain driven
Under the mountain slab.
Murad looks down in command
Over Sitnitza and Lab."

" Answer me, Ivan, answer ye me,
Where may the tent of Murad be ?
His milk-white tent, may one see it afar
O'er the plain, from the mountain, or out of the
wood ?

For I have sworn to the Prince Lazar
A solemn vow upon Holy Rood,
To bring him the head of the Turkish Tzar,
And set my feet in his infidel blood."

" Art mad, my pobratime, art mad ?
Where may the tent be, the tent of Murad ?
In the midst of a million eyes and ears,
In the midst of a million swords and spears,
In the heart of the camp of the Turk.
Fatal thy vow is, and wild is the work ;
For hadst thou the wings of the falcon, to fly
Fleeter than lightning, along the deep sky,
The wings of the falcon, though fleet be they,
Would never bear thee thy body away."

And Milosch abjured him : " O Ivan, my brother
(Though not by the blood, yet more dear than all
other),

See thou say nothing of this to our lord,
Lest ye sorrow his heart ; and say never a word,
Lest our friends be afflicted, and fail. But thou
Shalt rather answer to who would know,
And boldly aver to the Tzar,
'The Turk is many, but more are we,
And easy and light is the victory :
For he is not an army of men of war,
But a rabble rather
Of rascals that gather
To promise of plunder from places afar ;
Priests and pedlers,
Jugglers and fiddlers,
Dancers and drummers,
Varlets and mummers,
Boys and buffoons, — all craven loons
That never in burly of battle have bled,
Never have combated sword in hand ;
They are only come, the beggars, for bread,
And to feed on the fat of the land.
And the dreadful dismal dysentery
Is among their men, and their horses die,
Of a daily increasing malady.' "

IV.

Lazarus, lord of the Serbs, our Tzar,
At Krouchevatch high Slava doth hold.
Around him, sitting by cups of gold,
His sons and his seigneurs are.

To right, the reverend Young Bogdan ;
Round whom the nine young Yougovitch ;
To left, that thrice-accurséd man,
The traitor black, Vouk Brankovitch ;

And many a lord, along the board,
And last of all, in the knightly train,
Milosch, the manly Voïvod ;
Next him, Servian Voïvodes twain,
Ivan Kossantchitch, his brother in God,
And Milan Toplitza, a man without stain.

And the Tzar bade pour the purple wine,
And, brimming up his golden cup,
Lookt all adown that lordly line.

“ To whom shall the King first pledge ? ” he began.
“ If first to age, this health should be,
To no man do I drink but thee,
Revered old Youg Bogdan ;
But if to rank on high degree,
Vouk Brankovitch, I drink to thee.
If to friendship be the toast,
My brothers nine, I know not which
Amongst you all I love the most,
You gallant-hearted Yougovitch !
If to beauty, then be thine,
Ivan, first the flowing wine.
If to length and strength of limb,
Then the wine to Milan brim,
No man measures height with him.
If to valor, more than even
Stature, beauty, friendship, age,
Our first honors should be given,
Then to Milosch must we pledge.
Yet, be that as it may be,
Milosch, I drink to none but thee !
Milosch, thy health !
Drink, man, drink !

Why should any man care to think?
Traitor or true, or friend or foe,
To thee I drain this goblet low;
And, ere to-morrow, at Kossovo,
Thou thy master hast betrayed
To the Turk, for wages paid,
(Friend or foe, whate'er befall,
True or traitor, what care I?)
The King drinks to thee in this hall,
Lip to lip, and eye to eye,
Pledge me now in sight of all;
And, since to thee I fill it up,
Take thou too this golden cup,
And add it to ill-gotten wealth, —
Milosch, thy health!"

Lightly Milosch bounded up,
Lightly caught the golden cup,
To the black earth bowed his head,
And, "Noble master, thanks!" he said,
"For the pledge thou pledgest me,
And thanks that, of thy courtesy,
Thou to me dost first allot,
A true, true health, O King, to thee,
To pledge back in this golden token;
Thanks for this, my lord, but not
For the words which thou hast spoken.
For, oh! (and may my loyalty,
Dear liege, not fatal prove to me,
Before the truth is judged between
Us, and his fair company)
My true heart is sound and clean,
Traitor never have I been,
Traitor never will I be!

But at Kossovo to-morrow morn
 I trust, as I am a living man,
 A soldier and a Christian,
 To go to the death for the true, true faith,
 True to the last where my faith is sworn,
 Careless of calumny, scorning scorn !
 The traitor is sitting by thy side,
 He toucheth thy robe, thy wine he drinketh,
 To God and his king he hath foully lied,
 Vouk Brankovitch, the servile-eyed,
 Christian false, and perjured friend !
 God judge between us twain i' the end,
 And perish he in the thought he thinketh !
 To-morrow a noble day will be,
 For at Kossovo all men shall see
 What is the truth betwixt us two,
 And who is traitor, and who is true.
 For I swear by the great sun in the sky,
 And I swear by the living God on high
 That judgeth us all, whate'er befall,
 When at Kossovo upon battle-plain,
 Murad, the Turk, I have sought and slain
 (Sought and slain, for I swore by the rood
 To set my feet in his Turkish blood),
 If God but grant me safe and sane
 A living man to come again
 Back to white-walled Krouchevatch,
 And there that traitor foul I catch,
 Vouk Brankovitch, I will have by the throat.
 All men shall see it, and all men shall note,
 For it shall be done in the light of the sun.
 To my good war-lance I will fix his skull,
 As a woman fixes a ball of wool
 To her distaff when her spinning is done.

Then I will bear him to Kossovo,
Bear him back to the battle-plain;
All men shall see it, and all men shall know
Who is the traitor of us twain."

v.

At the royal board a noble pair
Sit together, and full sad they are.
Lazarus and his Militza fair,
The sweet-eyed Tzarina and the Tzar.
Troubled is the Tzar's broad brow,
The Tzarina's eyes are dim,
And, with tears that dare not flow,
The Tzarina says to him : —

"Lord Lazarus, O golden crown
Of Servia, and sweetheart my own!
To-morrow morn to Kossovo
With thee to the battle go
Servitors and Voïvodes.
I alone, in these abodes,
Vacant of thy voice, remain;
Hearing, haply, on the wind,
Murmurs of the battle-plain;
Heavy of heart, and sad of mind,
Silent in sorrow, alone with pain.
O think on this, my life, my lord,
Never a soul to carry a word
To Kossovo, from me to thee,
To Krouchevatch from thee to me;
Wherefore, lord of my brothers nine,
The sons of Youg, our father old,
(Golden stars in a crown of gold!)
Let one, for once, be wholly mine.

Mine to witness the tears I weep ;
Mine to solace the vigil I keep ;
Mine alone, of my nine brothers,
To pray with me for those eight others ;
Of brothers nine, but leave me one
To swear by when the rest be gone ! ”

And Lazarus, lord of the Serbs, replied :
“ Militza, sweetheart, wife true-eyed,
Of thy nine brothers, tell to me which
Thou lovest best, that he should rest
In our white palace to watch by thee.
Which of them, sweetheart ? — tell to me ! ”
And she answered, “ Bocko Yougovitch,”
And Lazarus, lord of the Serbs, replied :
“ Militza, sweetheart, wife true-eyed,
To-morrow, when from her red bower
The watery dawn begins to break,
Ere yet the sun hath felt his power
Seek thou the city walls, and take
Thy post against the Eastern gate :
There shalt thou see the army pass,
To mantle the field in martial state,
And trample the dew-drop out of the grass.
All lusty warriors, leal and true,
Who in battle have never turned their backs,
In complete steel, with curtle axe ;
Each spearman true, as his own true steel.
And, foremost of all, that, with iron heel,
Crush the wet violet down in the moss,
With purple plumes, in vesture rich,
Thy brother, Bocko Yougovitch,
Bearing the standard of the Cross.
Seize thou the golden bridle-ring,

Greet him fair from his lord the king,
And bid him that he the standard yield
To whomsoever he deemeth best,
And turn about from the battle-field,
In our white palace with thee to rest."

VI.

Now, when the dawn from her red bower
Upclomb the chilly skies, and, all
Athwart the freshening city tower,
The silent light began to fall
About the breezy yellow flower
That shook on the shadowy city wall,
Militza, through the glimmering streets,
Goes forth against the Eastern gate.
There, all i' the morning light, she meets
The army on to the distant down,
Winding out of the dusky town,
To mantle the field in martial state,
And trample the dew-drop out of the grass.
O brothers, a goodly sight it was!
With curtle-axe, in complete steel,
So many a warrior, lusty and leal,
So many a spearman, stout and true,
Marching to battle in order due.
And foremost among that stately throng,
With, over his helmet's golden boss,
Floating plumes of the purple rich,
The gallant Bocko Yougovitch
Bearing the standard of the Cross.
All blazing gold his corselet beamed,
Imperial purple fold on fold,
The mighty Christian ensign streamed

Over his red-roan courser bold ;
And high upon the standard top
Against the merry morning gleamed
An apple wrought of purest gold ;
Thereon the great gold cross, from which
All glittering downward, drop by drop,
Great golden acorns, lightly hung,
Over his shining shoulder flung
Flashes of light o'er Yougovitch.

She caught the bridle ring : in check
The red-roan courser pawed the ground.
About her brother's bended neck
Her milk-white arm she softly wound,
And half in hope, and half in fear,
She whispered in the young man's ear :
" Brother, my liege and thine, the king,
Commits me to thy comforting.
He greets thee fair, and bids me say
(The which with all my heart I pray)
That thou the royal ensign yield
To whomsoever thou deemest best,
And turn about from the battle-field
At Krouchevatch with me to rest,
That of nine brothers I may have one
To swear by when the rest be gone."

But " Foul befall," the young man said,
" The man that turns his horse's head,
Whoe'er he be, from battle-plain :
Turn thee, sister, turn again
To thy white tower ! I will not yield
The Holy Cross 't is mine to bear,
Nor turn about from the battle-field.

Not though the king should give, I swear,
The whole of Krouchevatch to me,
Would I turn thitherwards with thee.
To-day will be the noblest day
Yon sun in heaven did ever see ;
Nor shall my own true comrades say
This day, in sorrow or scorn, of me, —
' The craven heart that dared not go
To the great fight at Kossovo ;
That feared to find a saintly death,
Nor poured his blood for Holy Rood,
Nor fell for the Christian faith.' ”
He prickt his horse toward the gate,
And, through a cloud of hoary mist
Glittering like one great amethyst,
Swept forth into the morning wan.
Then up there rides in royal state,
With his seven sons, old Youg Bogdan.
She stopt them one by one ; she took
The bridle rein ; she spoke to them all.
Not one of them all would turn and look :
Not one of them all would listen and wait ;
But the trumpet sounded in the gate,
And they followed the trumpet call.

And after these, a little space,
Voïn Yougovitch not far
She spied come riding at slow pace,
Leading the destriers of the Tzar,
All trapt and housed with gold be they,
And going an amble by the way.
His good steed was of dapple gray.
She caught the bridle ring : in check
The good gray courser pawed the ground.

Her milk-white arm she softly wound
About her brother's bended neck ;
And half in hope, and half in fear.
She whispered in the young man's ear :
" Brother, my liege, and thine, the king,
Commits me to thy comforting.
He greets thee fair, and bids me say
(The which with all my heart I pray)
That thou the royal destriers yield
To whomsoever thou deemest best,
And turn about from the battle-field
In Krouchevatch with me to rest,
That of nine brothers I may have one
To swear by when the rest be gone."

But " Sister, foul befall," he said,
" The man that turns his horse's head,
Whoe'er he be, from battle-plain :
Turn thee, sister, turn again
To thy white tower ! I will not yield
The destriers of my lord the Tzar,
Nor turn about from the battle-field,
Where all my noble kinsmen are,
Albeit to meet my death I go
To the great fight at Kossovo ;
To pour my blood for Holy Rood,
To fight to the death for the Christian Faith,
With my kinsmen all to fight and fall,
With our foreheads against the foe."

Through the gate he prickt his steed,
And off to the dreary downs afar,
Leading as fast as he might lead
The destriers of the Tzar.

But Dame Militza, when no more
She heard the echoing hoofs that bore
Her brother from her, even as one
From whom the light of life is gone,
Fell swooning on the cold curb-stone.

Then came the Tzar himself anon,
And his great war-horse pacing on,
Did stoutly neigh in lusty pride ;
But when he past beside that stone,
He stopt, and stoopt, and swerved aside.
There, all her fair white length o'erthrown,
The Tzar his own true wife espied,
And fast the bitter tears down ran,
As he called to his servant Gouloban : —

“ Good Gouloban, my faithful friend,
In this thy trusty service prove ;
From off thy milk-white horse descend,
And, as thou dost thy master love,
In thy true arms thy mistress take,
With whom to her tall tower go ;
And, God forgive thee for my sake,
But go not thou to Kossovo.
I will requite thee when again
I meet thee, if I be not slain ;
Howbeit, I deem my doom at hand,
For the Turk is lord of half the land.”

Down stept the trusty serving-man,
Full fast his bitter tears down ran,
And sad was the heart of Gouloban.
He lifted up that drooping flower,
Lifted her on to his milk-white steed,

And rode with her to her tall tower,
As fast as he might speed.

There laid he her in linen bed,
And lowly laid her lovely head.
But o'er the airy morning smote,
Along the blowing breeze remote,
A solitary trumpet note.
Full well the milk-white war-horse knew
The music of that martial sound,
And in the court-yard pawed the ground,
And blithely from his nostrils blew
The morning mist. Then Gouloban
Adown the turret stairway ran,
He leapt to stirrup, he leapt to selle,
From fleeting hands he waved farewell ;
Again he heard the trumpet blow,
And he rode back to Kossovo.

VII.

All when the misty morn was low,
And the rain was raining heavily,
Two ravens came from Kossovo,
Flying along a lurid sky :
One after one, they perched upon
The palace of the great Lazar,
And sat upon the turret wall.
One 'gan croak, and one 'gan call,
"Is this the palace of the Tzar ?
And is there never a soul inside ?"

Was never a soul within the hall,
To answer to the ravens' call,

Save Militza. She espied
The two black birds on the turret wall,
That all in the wind and rain did croak,
And thus the ravens she bespoke :
“ In God’s great name, black ravens, say,
Whence came ye on the wind to-day ?
Is it from the plain of Kossovo ?
Hath the bloody battle broke ?
Saw ye the two armies there ?
Have they met ? And, friend or foe,
Which hath vanquisht ? How do they fare ? ”

And the two black fowls replied :
“ In God’s great name, Militza, dame,
From Kossovo at dawn we came.
A bloody battle we espied :
We saw the two great armies there,
They have met, and ill they fare.
Fallen, fallen, fallen are
The Turkish and the Christian Tzar.
Of the Turks is nothing left ;
Of the Serbs a remnant rests,
Hackt and hewn, carved and cleft,
Broken shields, and bloody breasts.”
And lo ! while yet the ravens spoke,
Up came the servant, Miloutine :
And he held his right hand, cleft
By a ghastly sabre stroke,
Bruised and bloody, in his left ;
Gasht with gashes seventeen
Yawned his body where he stood,
And his horse was dripping blood.

“ O sorrow, sorrow, bitter woe

And sorrow, Miloutine !” she said ;
“ For now I know my lord is dead.
For, were he living, well I know,
Thou hadst not left at Kossovo
Thy lord forsaken to the foe.”

And Miloutine spake, breathing hard :
“ Get me from horse : on cool greensward
Lay me, lay me, mistress mine :
A little water from the well
To bathe my wounds in water cold,
For they are deep and manifold ;
And touching my lip with rosy wine,
That I may speak before I die.
I would not die before I tell
The tale of how they fought and fell.”
She got him from his bloody steed,
And wiped the death-drops from his brow,
And in the fresh grass laid him low ;
And washt his wounds in water cold,
For they were deep and manifold ;
Full ghastly did they gape and bleed :
She stanchèd them with her garment’s fold,
And lightly held his body up,
And bathed his lips with rosy wine,
And all the while her tears down ran,
And dropt into the golden cup ;
And still she questioned of the war :
“ O tell me, tell me, Miloutine,
Where fell the glorious Prince Lazar ?
Where are fallen my brothers nine ?
Where my father, Youg Bogdan ?
Where Milosch, where Vouk Brankovitch ?
And where Strahinia Banovitch ?”

Then when the servant, Miloutine,
Three draughts had drained of rosy wine,
Although his eyes were waxing dim,
A little strength came back to him.
He stood up on his feet, and, pale
And ghastly, thus began the tale : —

“ They will never return again,
Never return ! ye shall see them no more ;
Nor ever meet them within the door,
Nor hold their hands. Their hands are cold,
Their bodies bleach in bloody mould.
They are slain ! all of them slain !
And the maidens shall mourn, and the mothers de-
plore,
Heaps of dead heroes on battle-plain.
Where they fell, there they remain,
Corpses stiff in their gore.
But their glory shall never grow old
Fallen, fallen, in mighty war,
Fallen, fighting about the Tzar,
Fallen, where fell our lord Lazar !
Nevermore be there voice of cheer !
Nevermore be there song or dance !
Muffled be moon and star !
For broken now is the lance,
Shivered both shield and spear,
And shattered the scymitar.
And cleft is the golden crown,
And the sun of Servia is down,
O'erthrown, o'erthrown, o'erthrown,
The roof and top of our renown,
Dead is the great Lazar !

“ Have ye seen when the howling storm-wind takes
The topmost pine on a hoary rock,
Tugs at it, and tears, and shakes, and breaks,
And tumbles it into the ocean ?
So when this bloody day began, —
In the roaring battle’s opening shock,
Down went the gray-haired Young Bogdan.
And following him, the noblest man
That ever wore the silver crown
Of age, grown gray in old renown,
One after one, and side by side
Fighting, thy nine brothers died :
Each by other, brother brother
Following, till death took them all.
But of these nine the last to fall
Was Bocko. Him, myself, I saw,
Three awful hours, — a sight of awe,
Here, and there, and everywhere,
And all at once, made manifest,
Like a wild meteor in a troubled air,
Whose motion never may be guest.
For over all the lurid rack
Of smoking battle, blazed and burned,
And streamed and flasht,
Like flame before the wind upturned,
The great imperial ensign splasht
With blood of Turks : where’er he dasht
Amongst their bruised battalions, I
Saw them before him reel and fly :
As when a falcon from on high,
Pounce on a settle-down of doves,
That murmurs make in myrrhy groves,
Comes flying all across the sky,
And scatters them with instant fright ;

So flew the Turks to left and right,
Broken before him. Milosch fell,
Pursued by myriads down the dell,
Upon Sitnitsa's rushy brink,
Whose chilly waves will roll, I think,
So long as time itself doth roll,
Red with remorse that they roll o'er him.
Christ have mercy on his soul,
And blesséd be the womb that bore him.
Not alone he fell. Before him
Twelve thousand Turkish soldiers fell,
Slaughtered in the savage dell.
His right hand was wet and red
With the blood that he had shed,
And in that red right hand he had
(Shorn from the shoulder sharp) the head
Of the Turkish Tzar, Murad.

“ There resteth to Servia a glory,
A glory that shall not grow old ;
There remaineth to Servia a story,
A tale to be chanted and told !
They are gone to their graves grim and gory,
The beautiful, brave, and bold ;
But out of the darkness and desolation,
Of the mourning heart of a widowed nation,
Their memory waketh an exultation !
Yea, so long as a babe shall be born,
Or there resteth a man in the land, —
So long as a blade of corn
Shall be reapt by a human hand, —
So long as the grass shall grow
On the mighty plain of Kossovo, —
So long, so long, even so,

Shall the glory of those remain
Who this day in battle were slain.

“ And as for what ye inquire
Of Vouk, — when the worm and mole
Are at work on his bones, may his soul
Eternally singe in hell-fire !
Curst be the womb that bore him !
Curst be his father before him !
Curst be the race and the name of him !
And foul as his sin be the fame of him !
For blacker traitor never drew sword, —
False to his faith, to his land, to his lord !
And doubt ye, doubt ye, the tale I tell ?
Ask of the dead, for the dead know well ;
Let them answer ye, each from his mouldy bed,
For there is no falsehood among the dead :
And there be twelve thousand dead men know
Who betrayed the Tzar at Kossovo.”

I.

THE STAG AND THE VILA.



'ER the mountain, the wild stag browses
 the mountain herbage alone,
 At morn he browses, at noon he sickens,
 at eve he maketh moan.
 From the rifts of the rocky quarries the Vila *
 hears him, and calls :

* The Vilas are supernatural beings that appear frequently in the poetry, and exist to this day in the popular superstition, of the Serbs. I have been unable to trace their origin, but they would seem to be a remnant of the early Slave mythology ; and, being a mountain race, to have survived the fate of the lowland members of the fairy family, notwithstanding the presence of perhaps almost as many " holy freres " as those to whose "*blessing of thornes and dairies*," Chaucer, in his day, attributed the fact that "*there bin no faeries*." They are a kind of fierce Oreads, dwelling among the mountains and forests, and sometimes about the margin of waste waters. Their attributes are varying, and not distinctly ascertainable, but they are mostly terrible, and hostile to man. They are not, however, incapable of sympathy with the human race ; for they have been known (though generally after being vanquished by them) to love great heroes. Evidence of this is to be found in the recorded exploits of Marko Kralievitch. That hero was beloved by one of these beings, who, indeed, prophesied his death, and that of his horse, Charatz. This animal was aged above one hundred and fifty years at the period of his death, and, according to some authorities, was the gift of a Vila. The love of these beings, however, is generally treacherous, and often fatal. The Vilas are not immortal, nor invulnerable. The Vila Baviola, who wounded the voivode Milosch with a golden

“ O beast of the mountain meadows, the woods,
and the waterfalls,
What sorrow is thine, so great that, browsing at
morn, at noon thou ailest,
And now to the stars thou art moaning ? What
is it that thou bewailest ? ”
And the stag to the Vila makes answer, mourn-
fully moaning low :
“ O queen of the mountain, my sister ! I mourn
for my lost white doe,
My milk-white doe, my darling ! from me, o’er the
mountain track,
She wandered away to the fountain ; she wandered,
she never came back.
Either forlornly she wanders, mourning me, miss-
ing her way,
Or the hunters have followed and found her, and
she hath perisht their prey,
Or else she forgets me, the faithless thing ! and
ever by valley and crag
Strays wanton after a belling note, and follows
another stag.

arrow, was nearly massacred by Marko. They preserve,
however, through incalculable time, supernatural youth and
beauty. They believe in God and Saint John, and abhor the
Turks. When they appear to mortal eyes it is as

“ Unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love,”

with long hair floating over their shoulders, and clothed in
snow-white vesture. They are wise in the use of herbs and
simples, they know the properties of every flower and berry,
and possess strange medical arts.

If she be lost in the lonesome places, and hollows
under the moon,
I pray that God, of his goodness, will guide her
back to me soon.
If the hunters have slain my beloved one, wander-
ing the woodland alone,
I pray that God, of his justice, will send them a
fate like my own ;
But if she follows another stag, caring no more to
come back,
I pray that God, in his vengeance, guide the hunter
fleet on her track."

II.

LOVE AND SLEEP.

I WALKT the high and hollow wood, from dawn
to evendew,
The wild-eyed wood stared on me, and unclaspt,
and let me through,
Where mountain pines, like great black birds,
stood percht against the blue.

Not a whisper heaved the woven woof of those
warm trees :
All the little leaves lay flat, unmoved of bird or
breeze :
Day was losing light all round, by indolent degrees.

Underneath the brooding branches, all in holy shade,
Unseen hands of mountain things a mossy couch
had made ;
There asleep among pale flowers my beloved was
laid.

Slipping down, a sunbeam bathed her brows with
bounteous gold,
Unmoved upon her maiden breast her heavy hair
was rolled,
Her smile was silent as the smile on corpses three
hours old.

“O God!” I thought, “if this be death, that makes
not sound nor stir!”
My heart stood still with tender awe, I dared not
waken her,
But to the dear God, in the sky, this prayer I did
prefer:

“Grant, dear Lord, in the blessed sky, a warm
wind from the sea,
To shake a leaf down on my love from yonder
leafy tree;
That she may open her sweet eyes, and haply look
on me.”

The dear God, from the distant sea a little wind
releast,
It shook a leaflet from the tree, and laid it on her
breast.
Her sweet eyes ope'd, and looked on me. How
can I tell the rest?

III.

TITTLE-TATTLE.

Two lovers kist in the meadow green,
They thought there was none to espy:
But the meadow green told what it had seen

To the white flock wandering by.
The white flock told it the shepherd :
The shepherd the traveller from far :
The traveller told it the mariner,
Watching the pilot star :
The mariner told it his little bark :
The little bark told it the sea :
The sea told it the river,
Flowing down by the lea :
The river told it the maiden's mother,
And so to the maid it came back :
The maiden, as soon as she heard it,
Curst them all for a telltale pack :

“ Meadow, be barren forever,
Grass, grow not henceforth from the mould of thee !
Flock, be devoured by the wolf !
Shepherd, the Turk seize hold of thee !
Traveller, rot of the fever !
Mariner, drown in the gulf !
Bark, may the whirlwind perplex thee,
And break thee against the shore !
Sea, may the moon ever vex thee !
River, be dry evermore ! ”

IV.

MATRIMONIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

WHERE mountains shut the silence up, a milk-white
maiden stood :
Her face was like a light, and kindled all the solitude.
And while the wild white mountain flowers turned
passionately pale,
And while the chilly water ran reluctant to the vale,

And the bald eagle, near the sun, stood still on
some tall peak,
That milk-white maiden to her own sweet face
began to speak : —

“ O face, sweet source of all my care,
Fair face (because I know thee fair !)
If I knew thou shouldst be kist
By any husband, withered, old, and gray,
I would wander, mist-like, with the mist,
The monstrous mountain many a league away,
Until, in some abandoned place,
Where the starved wolf cracks the bones
Of perisht men, and the wind groans
For want of something to devour,
I should find, wild in the wind,
Among the blotcht and mildewed stones,
The harsh-blowing absinth flower ;
And pluck the stubborn root of it,
That from the bitter fruit of it
I might the blighting juice express ;
Therewith to bathe thee, O my face, my face !
Till all thy beauty should be bitterness,
And each unloved caress
Burn on the old man’s lip, which should embrace
Death on thy rosy portals, O my face !

“ But if I knew, O my face, my face !
That thy lips should be kist by whom I would list,
I would glide, unespied, to a place, my face,
Where red roses, I know, ripely ripple and blow,
And white lilies grow more snowy than snow ;
And all in the balmy evening light,
While the dew is new, and the stars but a few,

The roses so red, and the lilies so white,
 I would pluck, with the sunset upon them, and press
 From those flowers their sweetest sweetnesses,
 To embalm thee, my face, till what he should embrace
 Should be fairer than lilies and richer than roses ;
 So that when on thy lips my beloved one reposes,
 A thousand summers of fragrant sighs
 Might fan the faint fire of his soul's desire
 With raptures pure as the rivers that rise
 Among the valleys of Paradise."

V.

LOVE CONFERS NOBILITY.

He. VIOLET,* little one mine !
 I would love thee, but thou art so small.

She. Love me, my love, from those heights of thine,
 And I shall grow tall, so tall !
 The pearl is small, but it hangs above
 A royal brow, and a kingly mind :
 The quail is little, little, my love,
 But she leaves the hunter behind.

VI.

A SOUL'S SWEETNESS.

He. O MAIDEN of my soul !
 What odor from the orange hast thou stole,
 That breathes about thy breast with such
 sweet power ?
 What sweetness, unto me
 More sweet than amber honey to the bee

* Violet is a pet name, as well as a proper name.

That builds i' the oaken bole,
And sucks the essential summer of the year
To store with sweetest sweets her hollow
tower?
Or is it breath of basil, maiden dear?
Or of the immortal flower?

She. By the sweet heavens, young lover!
No odor from the orange have I stole;
Nor have I robbed for thee,
Dearest, the amber dower
Of the building bee,
From any hollow tower
In oaken bole:
But if, on this poor breast thou dost discover
Fragrance of such sweet power,
Trust me, O my belovéd and my lover,
'T is not of basil, nor the immortal flower,
But from a virgin soul.

VII.

REMINISCENCES.

He. AND art thou wed, my Belovéd?
My Belovéd of long ago!

She. I am wed, my Belovéd. And I have given
A child to this world of woe.
And the name I have given my child is thine,
So that, when I call to me my little one,
The heaviness of this heart of mine
For a little while may be gone.
For I say not . . . "Hither, hither, my son!"
But . . . "Hither, my love, my Belovéd!"

VIII.

SLEEP AND DEATH.

THE morning is growing : the cocks are crowing :
Let me away, love, away !

'T is not the morning light ;
Only the moonbeam white.
Stay, my white lamb, stay,
And sleep on my bosom, sleep !

The breeze is blowing : the cattle are lowing :
Let me away, love, away !

'T is not the cattle there ;
Only the call to prayer.
Stay, my white lamb, stay,
And sleep on my bosom, sleep !

The Turks are warning to the mosque : 't is morn-
ing !
Let me away, love, away !

'T is not the Turks, sweet soul !
Only the wolves that howl.
Stay, my white lamb, stay,
And sleep on my bosom, sleep !

The white roofs are gleaming : the glad children
screaming :
Let me away, love, away !

'T is the night-clouds that gleam :
The night winds that scream.

Stay, my white lamb, stay,
And sleep on my bosom, sleep !

My mother in the gateway calls to me " Come
straightway ! "
And I must away, love, away !

Thy mother's in her bed,
Dumb, holy, and dead.
Stay, my white lamb, stay,
And sleep on my bosom, sleep !

IX.

A CONJUGAL DISPUTE.

ALL at the mid of the night, there arose
A quarrel 'twixt husband and wife ;
For, the young Omer Bey and his spouse,
Falling into discussion and strife,
Wild words to each other they said,
Side by side, at the dead
Of the night, on their marriage-bed.

Had it been about anything less
The quarrel might have passed by ;
But it was not a trifle, you guess,
That set words running so high.
Yet the cause in dispute (to be brief)
Was only a white handkerchief,
Brodered all over with gold,
And scented with rose and with amber,
So sweet, the whole house could not hold
That scent from the nuptial chamber.
For (the whole truth herewith to disclose)

This handkerchief broidered with gold,
And scented with amber and rose,
Had been given to the Bey (to enfold
Her letters, which lay on his breast),
By the mistress that he loved best.
But his wife had a sensitive nose
For the scent of amber and rose ;
And the fiend himself only knows
Whether, but for a lie, ere the close
Of that quarrel there had not been blows.

“ You know I ’ve a sister, my treasure,
The wife of our friend Zekir Bey ;
I love her, you know, beyond measure,
And she, dear, on our bridal day,
To me gave this white handkerchief,
Broidered all over with gold,
And scented with amber and rose ;
Which precious, for her sake, I hold,
Though the scent of it, much to my grief,
Has troubled our nuptial repose.”

Smiling, her husband she heard,
Feeling no faith in his word,
For troubled his face was, she saw.
Up she leapt by the light of the taper,
Barefooted, and seized ink and paper,
And wrote to her sister-in-law : —
“ Wife of our friend, Zekir Bey,
Long live thy husband, naught ail him,
Mayst thou never have cause to bewail him !
Speak truth, and fear nothing. But say
(For truly the truth must be told)
To thy brother, on our bridal day,

Didst thou give a white handkerchief, brightly
Embroidered all over with gold,
And scented with rose and with amber
So sweet that the scent of it nightly
May be smelt in the Bey's bridal chamber?"

When this came to the wife of the Bey,
She burst into tears, as she read :
And "Pity upon me!" she said,
"For I know not, alas! what to say.
If I speak truth, I put strife
'Twixt the brother I love and his wife;
If I speak false, much I dread
Lest my husband die for it," she said.

Then the letter she laid in her breast,
And she pondered with many a sigh :
"I choose of two evils the least,
If my husband must die, let him die!
Since the choice lies 'twixt one or the other, —
Any husband a woman may spare,
But the sister that injures a brother
Does that which she cannot repair."

Thus shrewdly the matter she saw :
And she wrote to her sister-in-law : —
"Wife of my brother, the Bey!
My husband is well. May naught ail him!
And I trust I shall never bewail him.
To my brother on your marriage day
(And truly the truth shall be told)
I gave a white handkerchief, brightly
Embroidered all over with gold,
And scented with rose and with amber

So sweet, that the scent (as you say,
And as I cannot doubt of it) nightly
May be smelt in the Bey's bridal chamber."

X.

DEGREES OF AFFECTION.

UP and down the Tchardak,* underneath the blossomed roof,
Musing, young Iôvo,† at midnight, walkt all aloof.
Suddenly the Tchardak broke beneath him: slipping through
The rotten plank, he fell, and his right arm was
snapt in two.
Straight, a leech he sought him. Evil leech, in truth, he found.
Save the mountain Vila, none had skill to heal the wound:
But the Vila claimed in price of service, ere the cure began,
The right hand of the mother of the maimed and mangled man;
The long hair of his sister with the ribbon in the hair;
And the white pearl necklace which his wife was wont to wear.
The mother gave her right hand, and the sister gave her curls;
But the wife refused her necklace . . . "I? I will not give my pearls!

* A sort of gallery or veranda, running round a house.
Also, sometimes, a pavilion, summer-house, or granary.

† Diminutive for Iovan, or John.

Each is perfect, each is precious, nowhere else is
such a set.

'T was my dowry from my father, and I mean to
wear it yet."

This the Vila of the mountain heard ; and, angered
in her mood,

She dropt a little purple drop of poison in the
food

Of young Iövo, and he died.

Then, for the murdered man,
Those three women to lament, in funeral dole
began.

One there was that, deeply mourning, evermore did
grieve :

One that missed and mourned for him at morning
and at eve :

One that mourned him now and then, with eyes a
little dim,

And looks a little changed, whenever she remem-
bered him.

She whose sorrow ceased not, mourning more than
any other,

Missing aye her murdered son, was young Iövo's
mother :

She that mourned at morning, and at evening
mourned and missed her

Brother, when day came or went, was young Iövo's
sister.

She that mourned him now and then, when some-
times in her life

Old memories filled vacant hours, was young Iövo's
wife.

XI.

THE FAIR IKONIA.

THE fair Ikonia boasted at the bath,
Gayly, amidst the matrons " Tell me which
Amongst you, matrons, such a husband hath
As mine, Iövo Morniakovitch ?
Where he goeth, there I go :
Where he resteth, there rest I :
Is he silent ? then I know
That he names me silently :
Does he speak ? of me he speaketh :
Does he dream ? of me he dreameth :
Does he wake ? for me he waketh :
Mine by night, when moonlight beameth !
Mine at dawn, when daylight breaketh !
First from dreams of me to wake,
That his kiss may ope my eyes :
*' Dear, the dawn begins to break,
Light of my life, arise ! arise ! '*
Life is long, the journey through it
Lone and weary, others tell.
I shall never turn and miss him
From my side, and this is well."
This the wily widow, Anna,
Heard, and slyly slipt away :
Then she clothed herself with splendor :
And she stood, in rich array,
Where, from the Bazar, Iövo
Came home, singing all the way :
Deckt her cheeks with painted roses,
Darker dyed her midnight hair,
Breathed the breath of perfumed posies,
Laid her bounteous bosom bare,

Stood like glory in the gateway,
Murmured, mild as evening air,

“ Sad, Iövo, seems thy case,
Wedded to a barren wife ;
If thou wouldst not see thy race
Pass and perish, with thy life,
Wed with me, and I will bear thee
Every year a noble heir,
Every year a gracious infant,
With strong hands and golden hair.” *
Long he listened : soft her voice was ;
Long he lookt : her dark eyes glistened.
As the counsel, so the choice was.
All too long he lookt and listened.
Thus the wily widow, Anna,
Won Iövo then and there :
And each year a boy she bore him
With strong hands and golden hair.
Silent walked the fair Ikonian,
Making neither moan nor word,
Up the great Bazar walkt silent,
And she bought herself a cord :

In the garden square a golden
Orange-tree grows all alone,
There her silken cord she fastened,
And she hanged herself thereon.

Came one running to Iövo,
“ On thy golden orange-tree,
Fair Ikonian, dead, is hanging.”

* The epithet “golden ” generally implies “strength ” in the Serb poetry. The words are literally “with golden hands,” &c.

“Hanging? Let her hang!” quoth he,
“I’ve a fairer far than she.”

XII.

A WISH.

I WOULD I were a rivulet,
And I know where I would run!
To Save, the chilly river,
Where the market boats pass on;
To see my dear one stand
By the rudder; and whether the rose
Which, at parting, I put in his hand,
Warm with a kiss in it, blows;
Whether it blows or withers:
I pluckt it on Saturday;
I gave it to him on Sunday;
On Monday he went away.

XIII.

IMPERFECTION.

ALL in the spring,
When little birds sing,
And flowers do talk
From stalk to stalk;
Whispering to a silver shower,
A violet did boast to be
Of every flower the fairest flower
That blows by lawn or lea.
But a rose that blew thereby
Answered her reproachfully
(All in the spring,
When little birds sing,

And flowers do talk
From stalk to stalk) :
“ Violet, I marvel me
Of fairest flower by lawn or lea
The fairest thou shouldst boast to be ;
For one small defect I spy,
Should make thee speak more modestly :
Thy face is fashioned tenderly,
But then it hangs awry.”

XIV.

EMANCIPATION.

THE Day of Saint George! and a girl prayed thus :
“ O Day of Saint George, when again to us
Thou returnest, and thy carouse
Here in my mother's house,
Mayst thou find me either a corpse or a bride,
Either buried or wed ;
Rather married than dead ;
But however that may betide,
And whether a corpse or a spouse,
No more in my mother's house.”

XV.

THE VOICE OF NATURE ; OR, WHAT THE FISH
SAID TO THE MAIDEN.

By the sea a maiden is sitting,
And she says to herself at her knitting :
“ O my heart ! what more deep than the ocean,
Or more wide than the plain can be ?
Or more swift than the horse in his motion ?

Or more sweet than the food of the bee ?
Or more dear than a brother ? ”
And a fish from the sea replies :

“ O maiden, but a little wise !
The plain is less wide than the sea,
And the heaven more deep than this is ;
Eyes swifter than horses be ;
And honey less sweet than kisses ;
And a lover more dear than all other.”

XVI.

THE MALADY OF MOÏO.

Moïo, the Tzarovitch (bolder is no man !)
Walkt to the Bath with the Turk lords one day :
Mahmoud the Pacha's white wife (and what woman
Is fairer than she is ?) was walking away.
Even as the sun, o'er the ardors of even,
Looks on the moon, and the moon on the sun,
Wistfully, each, disunited in heaven,
Soon to be pacing far pathways alone,
So through the mist of a moment of ecstasy,
Thrilled with a rapture delicious and dim,
Mute on the pale Pachinitza the Tzarovitch
Gazed, the pale Pachinitza on him.
Moïo walkt silently back to his palace :
Troubled his heart was, and changed was his mood
Straightway he sickened of love, and lay dying,
Dying of love for the wife of Mahmoud.
Ladies the loveliest all came to visit him :
Only the wife of Mahmoud stayed away.
Then the Sultana rose up and wrote to her :
“ Wouldst thou be greater than all of us, say ?

Moïo is lying upon his couch dying ;
Sore is his sickness, and fatal they say :
Ladies the loveliest all come to visit him,
Thou, art thou more, Pachinitza, than they ? ”
She, when she heard of it, loopt up her white sleeve,
Loopt up her light robe as white as a star ;
Presents she bore for him, worthy a monarch’s son,
Figs from the sea-coast, and grapes from Mostar.
Lightly she trod o’er the long golden gallery,
Past all ungreeted the corridor dim,
Pale, the dumb purple pavilion she entered,
Where the Sultana was watching by him.
Softly she sat by his bedside, and softly
Wiped from his forehead the fever, and said :
“ This is a malady known to me surely !
Long did I watch, and long weep by the bed
Once where my brother lay moaning and mad of it,
Moaning and maddened, unable to move ;
Poison they said it was. I, too, have drunk of it.
This is the passionate poison of love.”
Trembling he listened, as trembling she uttered it.
Lightly he leapt from the couch where he lay,
Fastened, behind her, the long golden gallery,
Laught as he sank on her soft lips, and they
Three white days, little heeding the daylight,
Three blue nights, little noting the moon,
Sealed by sweet kisses in silent caresses,
Rested, while round them May melted to June.
Gayly the nightingale sang in the garden.
Love the bird sang of, and sweet was the tune.
Three white days, little loving the daylight,
Three blue nights, ill at rest ’neath the moon,
Mahmoud the Pacha walkt, mourning his missed
one,

"Come, Pachinitza, come back to me soon!"
 Sadly the nightingale sang in his garden.
 Love the bird sang of, but harsh was the tune.
 Then, when the fourth day was low in the orient,
 Mahmoud the Pacha sat down in his hall;
 There a white letter he wrote to the Sultan:
 "Sultan Imperial, dear master of all!
 There's a white dove, with a gold treasure casket,
 Flown to thy doors from thy servant's abode.
 Send back my white dove, restore me my treasure,
 If thou hast fear of the justice of God."
 But to the Pacha the Sultan sent answer:
 "Mahmoud, my servant, behooves thee to know
 There's in my palace a falcon unhooded,
 And what he hath taken he never lets go."

XVII.

A SERVIAN BEAUTY.

'T is the Kolo * that dances before the white house,
 And 't is Stoian's fair sister, O fair, fair is she!
 Too fair she is truly, too fair Heaven knows,
 (God forgive her!) so cruel to be.
 The fair Vila, whom the wan clouds fondly follow
 O'er the mountain wherever she roam it,
 Is not fairer nor whiter than she.
 Her long soft eyelash is the wing of the swallow

* *Kolo*, signifying literally a wheel, is the generic term for all the Servian national dances; in most of which the dancers, either taking hands, or united each to each by a handkerchief tied round the waist or to the girdle, form a ring and advance or retreat to and from the centre to a monotonous music, either of the voice or some very simple wind instruments. Both sexes take part in these dances, which are frequently in the open air.

When the dew of the dawn trembles from it,
And as dawn-stars her blue eyes to me ;
Her eyebrows so dark are the slender sea-leeches ;*
Her rich-bloom'd cheeks are the ripe river peaches,
Her teeth are white pearls from the sea ;
Her lips are two half-opened roses ;
And her breath the south wind, which discloses
The sweetness that soothes the wild bee.
She is tall as the larch, she is slender
As any green bough the birds move ;
See her dance — 't is the peacock's full splendor
Hear her talk — 't is the coo of the dove !
And, only but let her look tender —
'T is all heaven melting down from above !

XVIII.

A DISCREET YOUNG WOMAN.

MILITZA has long soft eyelashes,
So darkly dreaming droopt on either cheek,
You scarce can guess what little lightning flashes
From those deep eyes, beneath them beaming,
break.
And her fair face, like a flower,
Has such drooping ways about it,
I have watcht her, many an hour,
Three full years, (O never doubt it !)
And yet never have seen fairly
Eyes or face, — revealed so rarely !

Only just to rob one glance
From the happy grass beneath her
On the green where maidens dance

* A strange, but very frequent, simile in Servian poetry.

When the month makes merry weather,
I the Kolo called together,
Trusting to my happy chance.
While the dance grew sweeter, faster
(Bosoms heaving, tresses shaken),
Suddenly with dim disaster
All the sky was overtaken.
Rolling darkness drowned the sunlight,
Rolling thunder drencht the valleys,
And in heaven was left but one light
From the lightning's livid sallies.

Like a necklace lightly shattered,
Shedding rubies, shedding pearls,
Here and there the Kolo scattered
All its bevy of bright girls.
Little, darling, timid creatures !
Each, with frightened, fluttered features,
Lifted up her pretty eyes
To the tempest growling o'er her ;
But Militza, very wise,
Still kept looking straight before her.
Little voices, silvery, wild,
All at once, in fretful cadence,
Broke out chiding the sweet child.
" What, Militza ! " cried the maidens,
" Those grass-grazing eyes, I wonder,
From the ground can nothing startle ?
Hark, child ! how it groans, the thunder !
See ! the lightnings, how they dartle
Here and there by angry fits,
In and out the stormy weather !
Hast thou wholly lost thy wits,
Little fool ? Or must we deem

Thou wouldst something wiser seem
Than the whole world put together ? ”

But Militza answers “ Neither
Have I lost my wits, nor grown
Wiser, maidens, I must own,
Than the whole world put together.
I am not the Vila white,
Who, amidst her mountain ranges,
Lifting looks of stormy light,
Through his fifty moody changes,
Woos the tempest’s troubled sprite
Down the mountain melting o’er her, —
I am not a Vila white,
But a girl that looks before her.”

XIX.

BOLOZANOVITCH THE KNAVE.

DJOUL,* the Turk, on a morning in May,
When every bird is brilliant in feather,
And every flower in blossom is gay,
To celebrate sweetly the merry May weather,
From dawn to dusk, in dance and play,
Called a hundred matrons and maids together.
And the fairest maiden of all, that day,
Was the maiden Bolozanovitch loved, they say.

He sought her all a summer noon,
And on to eventide ;
He sought her under the summer moon,
Through all the country wide,
Till at nightfall he came, in the mist and murk,
To the lighted house of Djoul, the Turk.

* For *Gul*, the Turk word, meaning *rose*.

“ Djoul, Djoul with raven hair !
Give me a shift of linen fair,
Such as thyself art wont to wear
On the day when the glad new moon is born ;
Paint me the eyebrow with antimony ;
These bronzed cheeks with white and red
Color ; and comb me, and curl me the head ;
Hang me over the shoulders free
Silken tresses two or three,
Such as by matron or maid are worn ;
Bind me the brow with a golden braid,
And clothe me, anon, in the clothes of a maid
From head to foot, with many a fold
Of the milk-white tunic flowing and full ;
And give me a distaff of gold
And a ball of Egyptian wool ;
Then suffer me thus 'mid the maidens to move,
That I may speak to the maiden I love.”

Djoul, the Turk with the raven hair,
Laught as she listened, and granted his prayer.
She clothed him in clothes of a maid,
Combed him and curled him the hair,
Painted his dark face fair,
Over his long limbs laid
Many a milk-white fold
Of vesture flowing and full ;
Then gave him a distaff of gold,
And a ball of Egyptian wool ;
And when he was trickt, and pincht, and padded,
And painted, and plastered, to look like a lass,
Because he yet lookt like the knave that he
was,
This good counsel she added :

“Boložanovitch, knave, take note !
When anon, 'mid our women ye stand,
The old women take by the hand,
And kiss on their finger tips ;
The young women kiss on the lips ;
But for those that are maidens and girls,
You shall kiss them under the throat,
And over the collar of pearls.”

Boložanovitch gladly (the knave !)
Gave heed to the counsel she gave,
And of all, as she bade him, took note.
The old women each on the finger tips
He kist, and the young women each on the lips,
And the maidens under the throat.

Maidenlike thus 'mid the maidens he moved,
Drooping the eyelid over the ground ;
But when he came to the maiden he loved,
He made her a little red wound
Just in the soft white fold
Of her slender throat. Then she
Cried out to the women around :
“Strike ! strike with your distaffs of gold,
The knave who has wounded me !
For this was not a woman. Behold,
’Tis the knave Boložanovitch, he !”

XX.*

THE WIFE OF HASSAN AGA.

WHAT is it so white on the mountain green ?
A flight of swans ? or a fall of snow ?

* This poem was translated by Goethe into German, in

The swans would have flown, and the snow would
have been
Melted away long ago.
It is neither snow-fall, nor yet swan-flight,
But the tent of Hassan Aga so white.
Sore was the wound which in battle he got,
His mother and sister (for these without blame
Might do as they listed) to visit him came ;
But his wife, for the modest-minded shame
Of a matron chaste, could not.

Wherefore, when he had healed him his wound so
sore,
Angered he said to his faithful spouse :
“ Meet me no more, see me no more,
'Mid our children, within my white house.”
He frowned and he rode away.
Silent with deep dismay,
The Turkish woman wept,
Bitterly wept at her husband's word,
Clothed herself with sorrow, and crept
Into her chamber, and covered her brows,
When the hoof of a horse was heard
At the door of the Aga's house.

The fair Agunitza* fled trembling away
To the window, to fling herself down in her fear :
Her two little daughters came running, and they

1789, from an Italian translation published by the Abbé Fortis in 1774 ; and was thus the first of these national songs and legends that ever passed from Servia into more civilized lands. Goethe's translation (*Klaggesang von der edeln Frau des Asan Aga*) is unrhymed.

* The wife of an Aga ; as *Pachinitza*, wife of a Pacha.

Cried : " Mother, come back, mother dear !
For it is not our father Hassan is here,
But our uncle Pintorovitch Bey."

Back she turned, faltering she came,
Weeping she fell on the breast of her brother,
And " O my brother," . . . she cried . . .
 " the shame,
From her children to sever a mother !"

The Bey held silence, nor answered a word,
His smile was stern but his eyes were dim,
As he drew from his silken pouch, and laid
In the hands of his sister the letter which said
That her dower to her should, in full, be restored,
And she should return to their mother with him.*
When the fair Turk that letter had read,
Her children she called to her one by one,
She kist her two boys on the brow and cheek ;
She kist her two girls on their lips' young red ;
But when to the little one, lying alone
In the little cradle, she came,
The little one smiled as he slept :
Her heart began to break
With an inward anguish of shame :
She could neither move nor speak :
She sat down by the cradle and wept.

Then her brother Pintorovitch Bey
Drew softly the cradle away,
Lifted her into the saddle behind,
Turned, as he mounted, and kist her,
And rode off to his house with his sister,
Over the hills, in the wind.

* The writing of divorce.

Not long in the house of her mother
She rested ; not even a week.
Lovers, one after the other,
Came riding to sue and to seek :
For never more lovely a lady
Breathed beauty to trouble the land,
And soon from Imoski the Kadi
Came gayly to ask for her hand.

“ O spare me, O save me, my brother !
My poor heart in sunder is reft :
My poor eyes are full of old tears :
Let me not be the bride of another,
For the sake of my little ones left,
For the sake of the once happy years ! ”

But of all this full lightly he thought,
And he gave to the Kadi her hand :
Then sadly the Bey she besought,
And moaning she made her demand, —
On a fair paper, pure white,
The words to Imoski to write :

*“ Fair greeting, in fair courtesy,
For her that hath been given to thee,
And courtesy to her prayer !
When the noble Svats * assembled be,*

* The Servian ceremonial of marriage is very peculiar. On the wedding-day the bridegroom proceeds to the house of the bride, accompanied by the guests, of both sexes, who attend the marriage on *his* invitation ; and who in this capacity (of guests or witnesses) are called *Svats*. He is supported by a *Koum*, or Best-man, a *Stari Svat*, or chief guest (the oldest and most honored of the company), who attest the marriage, and a *Dever* (paranymp or groomsman), which latter per-

*And ye come in a noble company
From her white house to carry thy bride,
Bring ye a long white covering fair
To cover her eyes ; that so, when ye ride
Beside the white house of the Aga, she
May see not the little ones there."*

When this letter was come to the Kadi's hand,
He assembled the noblest Svats of the land ;
And they all in a noble company rode
To carry the bride from her white abode.
Gayly to seek her they started,
And with her they gayly departed.
But, when they were merrily riding before
The Aga's white house, from the window at once
Lookt her two little daughters ; her two little sons
Came running to her from the door,
And " Come back, mother dear, with us,
come !
For dinner is waiting at home."

Then, weeping, the twice-wedded spouse
To the bold Stari Svat, " Dear, my brother
in God,

sonage may be a married man. These receive the bride from the hands of her parents, and are bound not to lose sight of her till she enters her new home. All participation in the nuptial ceremonial is interdicted by custom to the parents of the bride, who do not again behold their daughter until eight days after the marriage. A mother, indeed, cannot, compatibly with established usage, attend or be near her daughter in child-bed. By being groomsman or witness to a marriage, a relationship is contracted with the bride's family of a nature so close and so strict as to be deemed incompatible with marriage at any future period between the groomsman and any member of that family.

For the dear love of God, pass not by this abode !
Let the horse wait here by the house ;
That I, ere I see them no more,
(My dear ones, my little ones, see them no more!)
May speak, though it be but a while."
And the horses stopt straightway, and stood by the
door,

And she past through the door with a smile.
Gay gifts to her children she gave :
To both of her boys bold and brave
Golden jatagans rich, and to both
Of her girls a long tunic of cloth.
But when to the little one, lying alone
In the cradle, she came, she laid mournfully on
The small cradle a white orphan garment,
A little white garment, and sighed,
And turned from the cradle wild-eyed,
With looks of despairing endearment.

All of this Hassan Aga espied,
And he turned to his two sons, and cried :
" Little orphans, come here ! come to me !
For pitiless, children, is she,
Your mother stone-hearted, the bride ! "

Cruel, cruel and keen was the word !
Silent she listened and heard,
Heard the harsh words that he said.
To the black earth she bowed her bright head :
She had not another reply,
Than to droop her white forehead, and die :
For the heart of the mother was broken in twain
For the love, and the loss, of her little ones
ta'en.

XXI.

SLEEPLESSNESS.

SLEEP will not take the place of Love,
Nor keep the place from Sorrow.
O, when the long nights slowly move
To meet a lonely morrow,
The burden of the broken days,
The grief that on the bosom weighs,
And all the heart oppresses,
But lightly lies on restless eyes
Love seals no more with kisses.

XXII.

NEGLECTED FLOWERS.

LITTLE violet, drooping all alone, like my own
Drooping heart, I would pluck thee; but there's
none, no, not one!
To whom I dare to give thee: so I leave thee, and
pass on.
I would give thee gladly, gladly, if I dared, to Ali
Bey;
But too proud (ah well-a-day!) is Ali Bey — so
they say!
Proud he is! I do not dare. Would he care, he,
to wear
Any flower that buds or blows? . . . save the
rose, I suppose!
No! rest there, and despair! Live or die! Thou
and I
Have no chance to catch one glance from his eye,
passing by.

XXIII.

PLUCKING A FLOWER.

- He.* O MAIDEN, vermeil rose !
Unplanted, unsown,
Blooming alone
As the wild-flower blows,
With a will of thine own !
Neither grafted nor grown,
Neither gathered nor blown,
O maiden, O rose !
Blooming alone
In the green garden-close,
Unnoticed, unknown,
Unpropt, unsupported,
Unwatered, unfed,
Unkist, and uncourted,
Unwooded, and unwed,
O sweet wild rose,
Who knows ? Who knows ?
Might I kiss thee, and court thee ?
My kiss would not hurt thee !
O sweet, sweet rose,
In the green garden-close,
If a gate were undone,
And if I might come to thee,
And meet thee alone ?
Sue thee, and woo thee,
And make thee my own ?
Clasp thee, and cull thee, — what harm would
be done ?
- She.* Beside thy field my garden blows.
Were a gate in the garden left open . . . who
knows ?

And I watered my garden at eventide ?
 (Who knows ?)
 And if somebody silently happened to ride
 That way ? And a horse to the gate should be
 tied ?
 And if somebody, (who knows who ?) unespied,
 Were to enter my garden to gather a rose ?
 Who knows ? . . . I suppose
 No harm need be done. My belovéd one,
 Come lightly, come softly, at set of the sun
 Come, and caress me !
 Kiss me, and press me !
 Fold me, and hold me !
 Kiss me with kisses that leave not a trace,
 But set not the print of thy teeth on my face,
 Or my mother will see it, and scold me.

XXIV.

TRANSPLANTING A FLOWER.

O MAIDEN, mother's golden treasure !
 Purest gold of perfect pleasure !
 Do they beat thee, and illtreat thee,
 That I meet thee all alone ?
 Do they beat thee, that I meet thee
 All too often, all too late,
 After nightfall, at the gate
 Of the garden, all alone ?
 Tell me, tell me, little one,
 Do they do it ? If I knew it,
 They should rue it ! I would come
 Oftener, later, yet again,
 (Hail, or snow, or wind, or rain !)
 Oftener, later ! Nor in vain :

For if mother, for my sake,
 Were to drive thee out of home,
 Just three little steps 't would take
 (Think upon it, little one!) —
 Just three little steps, or four,
 To my door from mother's door.
 Love is wise. I say no more.
 Ponder on it, little one!

XXV.

A MESSAGE.

SWEET sister of my loved, unloving one,
 Kiss thy wild brother, kiss him tenderly!
 Ask him what is it, witless, I have done
 That he should look so coldly upon me?
 Ah, well I know he recks not! Let it be.
 Yet say "There's many a woodland nodding
 yet
 For who needs wood when winter nights be cold."
 Say "Love to give finds ever love to get.
 There lack not goldsmiths where there lacks not gold.
 The wood will claim the woodman by and by;
 The gold (be sure!) the goldsmith cannot miss;
 Each maid to win finds lads to woo: and I"
 Well, child, but only tell him, tell him this!
 Sweet sister, tell him this!

XXVI.

ISOLATION.

THE night is very dark and very lonely:
 And as dark, and all as lonely, is my heart:
 And the sorrow that is in it night knows only:

For the dawn breaks, and my heart breaks. Far
apart
From my old self seems my new self. And my
mother
And my sister are in heaven, — so they say :
And the dear one dearer yet than any other
Is far, far away.
The sweet hour of his coming night is falling !
The hour of our awakening bird on bough !
The hour of last embraces friends are calling,
“ Love, farewell ! ” and every hour is silent
now.

XXVII.

A REGRET.

Lost empire of my maidenhood !
Could I be once more what I would,
Then what I am I would not be.
Ah well-a-day, and woe is me !
Could I a maiden be once more,
And unknow all that I have known,
And feel as I have felt of yore,
I would not change with any queen ;
Not for sceptre, crown, or throne,
If I could be what I have been
Would I grow what I have grown.

Lost empire of my maidenhood !
Sweetest sweet ! and chiefest good
Now that thou art gone, I know,
Could I call thee back again !
How to keep thee. Even so !
Loss is all my gain !

